

State of Arkansas
92nd General Assembly
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A Bill

SENATE BILL

By: Senator A. Clark

For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT TO CLARIFY THE LAW CONCERNING DISTRACTED
DRIVING; TO MAKE A VIOLATION OF THE DISTRACTED
DRIVING LAW A SECONDARY OFFENSE; AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES.

Subtitle

CLARIFY THE LAW CONCERNING DISTRACTED
DRIVING; AND MAKE A VIOLATION OF THE
DISTRACTED DRIVING LAW A SECONDARY
OFFENSE.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

SECTION 1. Arkansas Code § 27-16-804(g)(1)(D), concerning the issuance
of and restrictions on drivers with restricted licenses, learner's licenses,
and intermediate licenses is repealed.

~~(D)(i) A driver with an intermediate driver's license
shall not use a cellular telephone device or other interactive wireless
communication device while operating a motor vehicle except for an emergency
purpose.~~

~~(ii) As used in this subdivision (g)(1)(D),
"emergency purpose" means the driver:~~

~~(a) Has reason to fear for his or her life,
safety, or property;~~

~~(b) Reasonably believes that a criminal act
may be perpetrated against him or her, his or her property, another person,
or another person's property; or~~



~~(c) Is reporting;~~

~~(1) A fire;~~

~~(2) A traffic accident;~~

~~(3) A serious road hazard;~~

~~(4) A medical emergency;~~

~~(5) A hazardous materials emergency;~~

~~(6) Another driver who is recklessly, carelessly, or unsafely driving; or~~

~~(7) Another driver who appears to be driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol.~~

SECTION 2. Arkansas Code Title 27, Chapter 51, Subchapter 15, is repealed.

~~Subchapter 15~~

~~Paul's Law: To Prohibit Drivers From Using a Wireless Communications Device While Operating a Motor Vehicle~~

~~27-51-1501. Title.~~

~~This subchapter is known and may be cited as "Paul's Law: To Prohibit Drivers From Using a Wireless Communications Device While Operating a Motor Vehicle".~~

~~27-51-1502. Purpose.~~

~~The purpose of this subchapter is to:~~

~~(1) Improve the safety of the roads for all drivers and passengers by prohibiting a driver of a motor vehicle from engaging in text messaging;~~

~~(2) Prevent accidents caused by the distractive practice of text messaging while operating a motor vehicle;~~

~~(3) Preserve human life and maintain the safety of the citizens of the State of Arkansas and visitors to our state by taking steps to reduce motor vehicle accidents, injuries, and deaths;~~

~~(4) Reduce health care costs, health insurance rates, and automobile insurance rates by attempting to reduce the number of motor vehicle accidents that cause injury, death, and property damage; and~~

~~(5) Reduce the amount of time that law enforcement and the court system work on accidents and offenses arising out of motor vehicle accidents caused by drivers who are distracted by sending or reading text messages.~~

~~27-51-1503. Definitions.~~

~~As used in this subchapter:~~

~~(1) "Access, read, or post to a social networking site" means using a wireless telecommunications device to interact with a web-based service that allows a person to:~~

~~(A) Construct a profile within a bounded system;~~

~~(B) Articulate a list of other members with whom the person shares a connection; and~~

~~(C) Communicate with other members of the site;~~

~~(2)(A) "Wireless telecommunications device" means a cellular telephone, a text-messaging device, a personal digital assistant, a stand-alone computer, or a substantially similar wireless device that is readily removable from the vehicle and is used to write, send, or read text or data through manual input.~~

~~(B) "Wireless telecommunications device" does not include a:~~

~~(i) Citizens band radio;~~

~~(ii) Citizens band radio hybrid;~~

~~(iii) Commercial two-way radio communication device;~~

~~(iv) Two-way radio transmitter or receiver used by a licensee of the Federal Communications Commission in the Amateur Radio Service; or~~

~~(v) Hands-free wireless telephone or device; and~~

~~(3) "Write, send, or read a text-based communication" means using a wireless telecommunications device to manually communicate with a person by using a text-based communication commonly referred to as a text message, instant message, or electronic mail.~~

~~27-51-1504. Use of wireless telecommunications device when driving.~~

~~(a)(1) Except as otherwise provided in subsection (b) of this section, a driver of a motor vehicle shall not operate a motor vehicle while using a wireless telecommunications device to:~~

1 ~~(A) Write, send, or read a text-based communication; or~~
2 ~~(B) Access, read, or post to a social networking site.~~

3 ~~(2) A driver of a motor vehicle is not in violation of~~
4 ~~subdivision (a)(1) of this section if he or she reads, selects, or enters a~~
5 ~~telephone number or name in a wireless telecommunications device for the~~
6 ~~purpose of making a telephone call.~~

7 ~~(b) A person is exempt from the requirements of this section if he or~~
8 ~~she is:~~

9 ~~(1) Performing official duties as a certified law enforcement~~
10 ~~officer, firefighter, ambulance driver, or emergency medical technician;~~

11 ~~(2) Operating a motor vehicle while using a wireless~~
12 ~~telecommunications device to:~~

13 ~~(A) Report illegal activity;~~

14 ~~(B) Summon medical or other emergency assistance;~~

15 ~~(C) Prevent injury to a person or property;~~

16 ~~(D) Relay information between a transit or for-hire~~
17 ~~operator dispatcher, if the wireless telecommunications device is permanently~~
18 ~~affixed to the motor vehicle; or~~

19 ~~(E) Navigate using a global positioning system; or~~

20 ~~(3) A physician or healthcare provider using a wireless~~
21 ~~telecommunications device to communicate with a hospital, health clinic, or~~
22 ~~the office of the physician, or to provide for the health care or medical~~
23 ~~emergency of a person.~~

24
25 ~~27-51-1505. Preemption.~~

26 ~~This subchapter supersedes and preempts all county or municipal~~
27 ~~ordinances regarding the use of a handheld wireless telephone for wireless~~
28 ~~interactive communication while operating a motor vehicle.~~

29
30 ~~27-51-1506. Penalties.~~

31 ~~(a)(1) A violation of this subchapter is punishable by a fine of not~~
32 ~~more than two hundred fifty dollars (\$250) for the first offense.~~

33 ~~(2) Each subsequent violation of this subchapter is punishable~~
34 ~~by a fine of not more than five hundred dollars (\$500).~~

35 ~~(b)(1) If a person pleads guilty or nolo contendere to or the finder of~~
36 ~~fact determines that the person was involved in a collision or accident while~~

1 in violation of this subchapter, a court shall in addition to any other
 2 sentence, assess an additional fine of double the amount of the standard fine
 3 imposed under subdivisions (a)(1) and (2) of this section.

4 ~~(2) The law enforcement officer investigating the collision or~~
 5 ~~accident shall indicate on the written accident form that the driver of the~~
 6 ~~motor vehicle was using a wireless telecommunications device at the time of~~
 7 ~~the collision or accident.~~

8
 9 SECTION 3. Arkansas Code Title 27, Chapter 51, Subchapter 16, is
 10 repealed.

11 Subchapter 16

12 ~~—Fewer Distractions Mean Safer Driving Act~~

13
 14 ~~27-51-1601. Title.~~

15 ~~This subchapter shall be known and may be cited as the “Fewer~~
 16 ~~Distractions Mean Safer Driving Act”.~~

17
 18 ~~27-51-1602. Definitions.~~

19 ~~As used in this subchapter:~~

20 ~~(1) “Emergency purpose” means the reason for contacting any of~~
 21 ~~the following to report an emergency:~~

22 ~~(A) Law enforcement personnel;~~

23 ~~(B) Fire department personnel;~~

24 ~~(C) Public safety personnel;~~

25 ~~(D) Emergency medical personnel; or~~

26 ~~(E) A 911 public safety communications center;~~

27 ~~(2)(A) “Handheld wireless telephone” means a wireless~~
 28 ~~interactive communication device with which a user engages in wireless~~
 29 ~~interactive communication using at least one (1) hand.~~

30 ~~(B) “Handheld wireless telephone” does not include a:~~

31 ~~(i) Hands free wireless telephone or device;~~

32 ~~(ii) Citizens band radio;~~

33 ~~(iii) Citizens band radio hybrid; or~~

34 ~~(iv) Global positioning or navigation device or~~
 35 ~~system;~~

36 ~~(3)(A) “Hands free wireless telephone or device” means a~~

~~wireless telephone or other wireless communication device that allows a user to engage in wireless interactive communication without the use of either hand with:~~

~~(i) An internal feature or function; or~~

~~(ii) An attachment or additional device.~~

~~(B) A hands free wireless telephone or device may be a permanent or temporary part of the wireless telephone or other wireless communication device.~~

~~(C) A hands free wireless telephone or device may require the use of either hand to activate, deactivate, or initiate a function of the wireless telephone or other communication device;~~

~~(4) "Highway work zone" means any area upon or adjacent to a highway, road, or street of this state where construction, reconstruction, maintenance, or any other type of work is being performed or is in progress;~~

~~(5) "Highway worker" means an employee of any of the following who is present in a highway work zone:~~

~~(A) The Arkansas Department of Transportation;~~

~~(B) A county;~~

~~(C) A municipality; or~~

~~(D) A contractor or subcontractor of the State Highway Commission or a county or municipality that is performing duties related to the highway work zone;~~

~~(6) "Wireless interactive communication" means talking, typing, emailing, or accessing information on the internet with a wireless telephone; and~~

~~(7)(A) "Wireless telephone" means a wireless interactive communication device.~~

~~(B) "Wireless telephone" includes a handheld wireless telephone and a hands free wireless telephone or device.~~

~~27-51-1603. Restrictions on drivers under 18 years of age.~~

~~(a) Except as provided under subsection (b) of this section, a driver of a motor vehicle who is under eighteen (18) years of age shall not use a wireless telephone for wireless interactive communication while operating a motor vehicle.~~

~~(b) A driver of a motor vehicle who is under eighteen (18) years of~~

~~age may use a wireless telephone for wireless interactive communication while operating a motor vehicle for an emergency purpose only.~~

~~27-51-1604. Restrictions on drivers at least 18 but under 21 years of age.~~

~~(a)(1) Except as otherwise provided in this section, the driver of a motor vehicle who is at least eighteen (18) but under twenty-one (21) years of age shall not use a handheld wireless telephone for wireless interactive communication while operating a motor vehicle.~~

~~(2) The driver of a motor vehicle who is at least eighteen (18) but under twenty-one (21) years of age may use a hands-free wireless telephone or device for wireless interactive communication while operating a motor vehicle.~~

~~(b) A driver of a motor vehicle who is at least eighteen (18) but under twenty-one (21) years of age may use a handheld wireless telephone for wireless interactive communication while operating a motor vehicle for an emergency purpose only.~~

~~27-51-1605. Enforcement.~~

~~A driver of a motor vehicle is not to be stopped or detained solely to determine compliance with this subchapter.~~

~~27-51-1606. Preemption.~~

~~This subchapter supersedes and preempts all county or municipal ordinances regarding wireless telephone use by drivers of motor vehicles.~~

~~27-51-1607. Penalties.~~

~~(a)(1) A violation of this subchapter is punishable by a fine of not more than two hundred fifty dollars (\$250) for the first offense.~~

~~(2) Each subsequent violation of this subchapter is punishable by a fine of not more than five hundred dollars (\$500).~~

~~(b) If a person pleads guilty or nolo contendere to or the finder of fact determines that the person was involved in a collision or accident while in violation of this subchapter, a court shall in addition to any other sentence, assess an additional fine of double the amount of the standard fine imposed under subdivisions (a)(1) and (2) of this section.~~

~~27-51-1608. [Repealed.]~~

~~27-51-1609. Restrictions in school zones.~~

~~(a) Except as provided under subsection (b) of this section, a driver of a motor vehicle shall not use a handheld wireless telephone while operating a motor vehicle when passing a school building or school zone during school hours when children are present and outside the building.~~

~~(b) A driver of a motor vehicle who is passing a school building or school zone during school hours when children are present and outside the building may use a handheld wireless telephone while operating a motor vehicle for an emergency purpose.~~

~~(c) This section does not apply to law enforcement officers.~~

~~27-51-1610. Restrictions in highway work zones.~~

~~(a) Except as provided under subsection (b) of this section, the driver of a motor vehicle shall not use a handheld wireless telephone while operating a motor vehicle in a highway work zone when a highway worker is present.~~

~~(b) The driver of a motor vehicle who is in a highway work zone when a highway worker is present may use a handheld wireless telephone while operating a motor vehicle for an emergency purpose.~~

~~(c) This section does not apply to law enforcement officers.~~

SECTION 4. Arkansas Code Title 27, Chapter 51, is amended to add an additional subchapter to read as follows:

Subchapter 18

- Distracted Driving Prohibited

DO NOT CODIFY. Title.

This subchapter shall be known and may be cited as "Paul's Law: Fewer Distractions Mean Safer Driving".

27-51-1801. Purpose.

The purpose of this subchapter is to:

1 (1) Improve the safety of the roads for all drivers and
2 passengers by prohibiting a driver of a motor vehicle from engaging in text
3 messaging and internet use;

4 (2) Prevent accidents caused by distracted driving;

5 (3) Preserve human life and maintain the safety of the citizens
6 of the State of Arkansas and visitors to our state by taking steps to reduce
7 motor vehicle accidents, injuries, and deaths;

8 (4) Reduce healthcare costs, health insurance rates, and
9 automobile insurance rates by attempting to reduce the number of motor
10 vehicle accidents that cause injury, death, and property damage;

11 (5) Reduce the amount of time that law enforcement and the court
12 system work on motor vehicle accidents and offenses arising out of motor
13 vehicle accidents caused by drivers who are distracted by the use of wireless
14 telecommunications devices; and

15 (6) Provide drivers, passengers, and law enforcement with a
16 clear and concise statement of the law concerning the use of wireless
17 telecommunications devices cell phones and the internet while operating a
18 motor vehicle.

19
20 27-51-1802. Definitions.

21 As used in this subchapter:

22 (1) "Emergency" means a situation in which a person is in need
23 of assistance from any of the following:

24 (A) Law enforcement personnel;

25 (B) Fire department personnel;

26 (C) Public safety personnel;

27 (D) Emergency medical personnel; or

28 (E) A 911 public safety communications center;

29 (2) "Wireless interactive communication" means talking, typing,
30 emailing, or accessing information on the internet via Wi-Fi, cellular data
31 or similar means; and

32 (3)(A) "Wireless telecommunications device" means a handheld
33 cellular telephone, a text-messaging device, a personal digital assistant, a
34 stand-alone computer, or a substantially similar wireless device that is
35 readily removable from a vehicle and is used to talk, type, or send, or read
36 text or data through manual input.

1 (B) "Wireless telecommunications device" does not include
2 a:
3 (i) Citizens band radio;
4 (ii) Citizens band radio hybrid;
5 (iii) Commercial two-way radio communication device;
6 (iv) Two-way radio transmitter or receiver used by a
7 licensee of the Federal Communications Commission in the Amateur Radio
8 Service;
9 (v) Hands-free wireless telephone or device; or
10 (vi) Global positioning or navigation device system.

11
12 27-51-1803. Use of a wireless telecommunications device while
13 operating a motor vehicle.

14 (a)(1) Except as provided in subsection (b) of this section, a driver
15 of a motor vehicle shall not operate a motor vehicle while using a wireless
16 telecommunications device to:

17 (A) Write, send, or read a text-based communication; or

18 (B) Access, read, or post to a social networking site.

19 (2) A driver of a motor vehicle is not in violation of
20 subdivision (a)(1) of this section if he or she reads, selects, or enters a
21 telephone number or name in a wireless telecommunications device for the
22 purpose of making a telephone call.

23 (b) A driver of a motor vehicle is exempt from the requirements of
24 this section if he or she is:

25 (1) Performing official duties as a certified law enforcement
26 officer, firefighter, ambulance driver, or emergency medical technician;

27 (2) Operating a motor vehicle while using a wireless
28 telecommunications device to:

29 (A) Report illegal activity;

30 (B) Summon medical or other emergency assistance;

31 (C) Prevent injury to a person or property;

32 (D) Relay information between a transit or for-hire
33 operator dispatcher; or

34 (E) Navigate using a global positioning system; or

35 (3) A physician or healthcare provider using a wireless
36 telecommunications device to communicate with a hospital, health clinic, or

1 the office of the physician or healthcare provider, or to provide for the
2 health care or medical emergency of a person.

3
4 27-51-1804. Restrictions on drivers under 18 years of age.

5 (a) Except as provided under subsection (b) of this section, a driver
6 of a motor vehicle who is under eighteen (18) years of age shall not use a
7 wireless telecommunications device or a hands-free wireless telephone or
8 device for wireless interactive communication while operating a motor
9 vehicle.

10 (b) A driver of a motor vehicle who is under eighteen (18) years of
11 age may use a wireless telecommunications device or a hands-free wireless
12 telephone or device while operating a motor vehicle only in an emergency.

13
14 27-51-1805. Restrictions on drivers at least 18 years of age but under
15 21 years of age.

16 (a)(1) Except as provided under subsection (b) of this section, a
17 driver of a motor vehicle who is at least eighteen (18) years of age but
18 under twenty-one (21) years of age shall not use a wireless
19 telecommunications device for wireless interactive communication while
20 operating a motor vehicle.

21 (2) A driver of a motor vehicle who is at least eighteen (18)
22 years of age but under twenty-one (21) years of age may use a hands-free
23 wireless telephone or device for wireless interactive communication while
24 operating a motor vehicle.

25 (b) A driver of a motor vehicle who is at least eighteen (18) years of
26 age but under twenty-one (21) years of age may use a wireless
27 telecommunications device for wireless interactive communication while
28 operating a motor vehicle only in an emergency.

29
30 27-51-1806. Restrictions in school zones.

31 (a) Except as provided under subsection (b) of this section, a driver
32 of a motor vehicle shall not use a wireless telecommunications device while
33 operating a motor vehicle when passing a school building or school zone
34 during school hours when children are present and outside the building.

35 (b) A driver of a motor vehicle who is passing a school building or
36 school zone during school hours when children are present and outside the

1 building may use a wireless telecommunications device while operating a motor
2 vehicle only in an emergency.

3 (c) This section does not apply to law enforcement officers.

4
5 27-51-1807. Restrictions in highway work zones.

6 (a) Except as provided under subsection (b) of this section, a driver
7 of a motor vehicle shall not use a wireless telecommunications device while
8 operating a motor vehicle in a highway work zone when a highway worker is
9 present.

10 (b) A driver of a motor vehicle who is in a highway work zone when a
11 highway worker is present may use a wireless telecommunications device while
12 operating a motor vehicle only in an emergency.

13 (c) This section does not apply to law enforcement officers.

14 (d) As used in this section:

15 (1) "Highway work zone" means any area upon or adjacent to a
16 highway, road, or street of this state where construction, reconstruction,
17 maintenance, or any other type of work is being performed or is in progress;
18 and

19 (2) "Highway worker" means an employee of any of the following
20 who is present in a highway work zone:

21 (A) The Arkansas Department of Transportation;

22 (B) A county;

23 (C) A municipality; or

24 (D) A contractor or subcontractor of the State Highway
25 Commission or a county or municipality that is performing duties related to
26 the highway work zone.

27
28 27-51-1808. Enforcement.

29 A driver of a motor vehicle is not to be stopped or detained solely to
30 determine compliance with this subchapter.

31
32 27-51-1809. Penalties.

33 (a)(1) A violation of this subchapter is punishable by a fine of not
34 more than two hundred fifty dollars (\$250) for the first offense.

35 (2) Each subsequent violation of this subchapter is punishable
36 by a fine of not more than five hundred dollars (\$500).

1 (b) If a person pleads guilty or nolo contendere to a violation of
2 this subchapter or the finder of fact determines that the person was involved
3 in a collision or accident while in violation of this subchapter, a court
4 shall, in addition to any other sentence, assess an additional fine of double
5 the amount of the standard fine imposed under subdivisions (a)(1) and (2) of
6 this section.