PERSUASIVE SPEECH:

SHOULD CELL PHONE USE IN CARS BE BANNED?

FOR

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As I drove home from an appointment the other day, I was in the middle lane of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Boulevard (**Name a popular local thoroughfare**). There was traffic, but it was moving along, and although the conditions weren’t “bumper to bumper,” we, as responsible drivers needed to pay attention to the road and anticipate the next move of the motorists around us. I noticed that there was a car a little ahead of me in the left lane, and it was swerving and moving erratically. Was the driver under the influence? Was the driver sick? Were there mechanical issues with the vehicle? I was able to catch up to be parallel with the driver and as I glanced to my left, I saw the driver attempting to hold the steering wheel with one hand and send a text with the other. We all hear of the horror stories of texting or making phone calls while driving-even on local streets, even in slow traffic, and the truth is, as I watched that car, I realized anyone of us might be the victim of reckless driving due to irresponsible cell phone use while operating a vehicle.

There is a website sponsored by the United States Government whose sole purpose is to warn of the dangers of what is known as “distracted driving.” Distracted driving is described as “any activity that could divert a person’s attention away from the primary task of driving.” Although there are other conditions that contribute to added risk from distractions such as eating and drinking, talking to passengers, grooming and reading, adjusting a radio, using a navigation system, etc, texting and dialing a cell phone while operating a vehicle are considered especially dangerous because the actions involved require “visual, manual, and cognitive attention from the driver.” Cell phone use is by far the most dangerous and alarming distraction for the driver.

The site goes on to inform us:

* In 2010, 3092 people were killed in crashes involving a distracted driver and 416,000 were injured in crashes that same year, also due to distracted driving.
* In research done by Carnegie Mellon Institute, it was discovered that “driving while using a cell phone reduces the amount of brain activity associated with driving by 37%. That means that more than 1/3 of our conscious ability to judge a situation is gone while using a cell phone when driving!
* In the month of June 2011, **more than 196 billion** text messages were sent and received in the United States, and that was a 50% increase from 2 years prior. We’re now in mid-2012-can you imagine how many more texts are being sent and received-especially while driving?
* The action of sending and receiving an average text takes about 4.6 seconds. If someone were driving at 55 miles per hour, that would be like driving the entire length of a football field **blindfolded**.

So what to we do? How do we handle this issue? It is no secret that everyone’s life is getting more and more busy. Students are over-scheduled, parents are overworked, and everyone is busier than they have ever been-just to survive, but we must consider that indulging in a dangerous action that places everyone at serious risk is not the answer. Please also consider the following:

* Although each state imposes its own laws with regard to cell phone use while driving, several states have already initiated complete bans on the use of handheld cell phones while operating a motor vehicle. According to the Governor’s Highway Safety Association, as of July 2012, there are 10 states, plus Washington DC, the Virgin Islands and Guam, that prohibit all drivers from using handheld cell phones while driving.
  + 32 states ban cell phone use by novice drivers
  + 19 states plus Washington DC prohibit school bus drivers from using cell phones when passengers are present.

As young people, we tend to be optimists. We think that bad things happen to others, and “it couldn’t possibly happen to us!!” I remember a few years ago, a friend was on the phone with her boss. The employer was driving to her appointment, when all of a sudden; my friend heard a scream and a crash. The employer had hit a truck on the highway-she didn’t notice it because she was distracted by her phone call. She wound up hitting the median, totaling her car, puncturing a lung and had to be in the hospital to recuperate for several weeks. She paid a steep price for carelessness, but there are those who have not been lucky enough to leave the hospital or heal. Thousands of people die each year from needless carelessness-either their own or someone else’s. The real tragedy is when some unknown person places our lives in jeopardy-like the driver I first mentioned on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Boulevard.

The legalities of who is responsible for auto accidents while using a cell phone are being avidly debated every day. There are those that believe if a person involved in a car accident while driving is on a business call, then the employer is responsible. There are arguments that if a young person is involved in a car accident while using a cell phone, the parents are responsible. The bottom line is, we are **all** responsible. Whether we are the ones who are driving and using a cell phone, or the motorists trying to avoid distracted drivers, everyone is in jeopardy and we are all responsible for the safety of our fellow motorists and ourselves. We have all heard horror stories of fatal crashes occurring while drivers are under the influence. Cell phone use while driving creates the equivalent degree of impaired function as having a blood alcohol level of .08 or higher-and that’s legally intoxicated. It is because of this that I believe cell phone use while driving should be banned. Thank you.

**OUTLINE**

* Introduction
  + Story illustrating dangers of driving while using a cell phone
* Body
  + Explanation of “distracted driving”
  + Statistics illustrating the dangers of distracted driving
  + Statistics showing the growing popularity of cell phone use over the past few years
  + Discussion about resolutions to the issue
  + Information about state laws regarding cell phone bans
* Conclusion
  + Story illustrating personal experience of the consequences of cell phone use while driving
  + Discussion of where responsibility lies
  + Distinction between driving under the influence and distracted drivin-none.