SHOULD CELL PHONE USE IN CARS BE BANNED?

PERSUASIVE SPEECH FOR

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There are several undeniable facts of life we all deal with in modern times. Let’s face it. We are all busier than we have ever been, in spite of all of the technology that is designed to make our lives easier, somehow everything seems to be getting more complicated, unless we somehow find a way to “live off the grid,” we are all getting more and more dependent on the technology at hand-literally, on a 24/7 basis, and…. one more thing….”newfangled” gadgets like 3-D navigational guides, rear view back up cameras, and devices designed to aid in our commute are seriously turning our once simple automobiles into “funhouses” on wheels with instrument panels and options to rival a fighter plane. Given all of these conditions to deal with, we must ask the question, “Should cell phone use in cars be banned?” And then we have to find an equitable and adequate response, which is not so easy to do.

Cell phone use in cars while operating a vehicle comes under the umbrella definition of “distracted driving.” This is defined as “driving while engaged in other activities such as using a cell phone, texting, eating or reading.” The three types of distractions can be categorized as visual, manual, and cognitive, and all of those categories are present while using a cell phone while driving. Anything that a person does that takes his or her attention away from the critical action of concentration on the road, the vehicles and surrounding conditions is considered to be a distraction. In addition, you may know **your** capabilities and limitations regarding your ability to focus while driving a vehicle, but can you account for the person driving the car in the lane next to you who might be swerving while simultaneously attempting to drive and use a cell phone? According the National Safety Council, approximately 24% of crashes that occurred in 2010 involved drivers talking or texting on phones…. and that was way back in 2010!! Can you imagine how much **more** dependent we have become on our “technology” in the past two years?

The reality is two-fold. While people are dying or being permanently injured as a result of cell phone use in cars, the automobile and technology industries are getting more and more intertwined with each other while offering a myriad of new devices installed in cars, making distracted driving bans almost impossible to enforce.

In an article in the New York Times, regarding the National Transportation Safety Board’s recommendation to ban cell phone use in cars, Dutch Mandel of Autoweek was quoted as saying, “Hallelujah! There *is* sanity in Washington, D.C. This is a two-ton automobile you’re operating, people. And you aren’t operating it to the best of your abilities. It might sound selfish, but when you operate it like this, you put me at risk.” The article also quotes Mark Phelan of the “Detroit Free Press” who counterpointed by saying, “Banning all uses of mobile phones in cars would be the most pointless and universally ignored law since Prohibition.”

So, the question remains, “Should cell phone use in cars be banned?” I have to say that it should be banned. To allow unfettered use of technology while driving would lead to an almost lawless society with regard to consideration for other drivers and their safety as well as one’s own. With a ban in place, as Mr. Phelan suggested, it would probably be “the most universally pointless law since Prohibition.” But will it raise the consciousness of the driving public? I believe it would. The goal of every driver is to be as conscious and aware of all stimuli and surroundings while focusing on road conditions, and knowing that an act of distracted driving can and would lead to legal consequences, would act as a deterrent or at least a vehicle (pardon the pun) to inspire conscious choice and thought while engaging in a known illegal act. After all…. how many of you deliberately park in a “red no parking zone” and don’t expect to get a ticket?