



ADVOCATES
FOR HIGHWAY
& AUTO SAFETY

May 12, 2025

The Honorable Henry McMaster
Governor of South Carolina
Office of the Governor
1100 Gervais Street
Columbia, SC 29201

Dear Governor McMaster:

Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety (Advocates), which is an alliance of consumer, safety, medical, public health and law enforcement groups and insurance companies working together to pass highway and auto safety laws that prevent crashes, save lives, reduce injuries, and contain costs, respectfully requests you sign into law House Bill (HB) 3276 to curb distracted driving.

Across the Nation in 2023, 3,275 people were killed in crashes involving a distracted driver, accounting for 8 percent of all crash fatalities.¹ Nonoccupants (pedestrians, bicyclists, and others) accounted for 19 percent (621) of distraction-affected fatalities in 2022.² An estimated 289,310 people were injured in distraction-affected crashes in 2022.³ It is important to note that distracted driving crashes are known to be underreported due to differences in police crash report coding, database limitations and other challenges.

Distracted driving not only results in crashes, deaths and injuries, but it also unnecessarily expends taxpayer dollars. Nationally, crashes in which at least one driver was identified as being distracted imposed an economic cost of \$98.2 billion in 2019.⁴ In 2018 alone, distracted driving crashes cost employers nearly \$19 billion.⁵ South Carolina incurs approximately \$6.3 billion in economic harm annually due to motor vehicle crashes, which is equivalent to an annual “crash tax” of \$1,218 per resident according to a 2019 analysis.⁶ When updated for inflation alone, in 2025, costs would equate to \$7.91 billion to the state and \$1,537 per resident.⁷

Distracted driving’s impact and incidence must be addressed. HB 3276 will reduce distracted driving by banning manual use of mobile electronic devices and updating the law to curb visual and cognitive distractions. A more comprehensive law is necessary to keep up with advances in technology which have expanded the range and capability of distracting electronic communication platforms and options.

In 2023, 1,047 people were killed in motor vehicle crashes in South Carolina.⁸ This represents a 27 percent increase since 2014.⁹ We appreciate your consideration and ask you to sign HB 3276 to enhance safety for all road users.

Sincerely,

Catherine Chase, President

¹ Overview of Motor Vehicle Crashes in 2023, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), Apr. 2025, DOT HS 813 705, available at <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/Publication/813705>.

² Overview of Motor Vehicle Crashes in 2023, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), Apr. 2025, DOT HS 813 705, available at <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/Publication/813705>.

³ Overview of Motor Vehicle Crashes in 2023, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), Apr. 2025, DOT HS 813 705, available at <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/Publication/813705>.

-
- ⁴ The Economic and Societal Impact of Motor Vehicle Crashes, 2019, NHTSA, Feb. 2023, DOT HS 813 403, available at <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813403>.
- ⁵ Cost of Motor Vehicle Crashes to Employers 2019, NETS, 2018 data expressed in 2019 \$, available at <https://trafficsafety.org/?ddownload=26813>.
- ⁶ The Economic and Societal Impact of Motor Vehicle Crashes, 2019, NHTSA, Feb. 2023, DOT HS 813 403, available at <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813403>.
- ⁷ CPI Inflation Calculator, BLS, January 2019 to January 2025 dollars, available [here](#).
- ⁸ State Traffic Safety Information for South Carolina, NHTSA, available at <https://cdan.dot.gov/STSI/stsi.htm>.
- ⁹ State Traffic Safety Information for South Carolina, NHTSA, available at <https://cdan.dot.gov/STSI/stsi.htm>.