

# Montigny legislation will prohibit using handheld cell phones while driving

Today, Rules Chairman and Senate Assistant Majority Leader Mark C. Montigny announced that his legislation prohibiting the use of handheld cell phones while driving has been released from the Rules Committee and scheduled for debate on the Senate floor for Thursday, June 29, 2017. In addition to cracking down on distracted driving, the bill also provides an affirmative defense for any violator who can demonstrate that they used their device in certain emergency situations. These measures would provide law enforcement with the necessary tools to keep roadways safe.

Senator Montigny has been a longtime leader in legislative efforts to prohibit the use of mobile telephones and devices while driving. Over ten years ago he filed one of the first bills in the country. According to the National Safety Council, motor vehicle crashes claimed well over 30,000 lives in the United States in 2013. Distracted driving, including cell phone use, accounts for 26% of those fatalities. In 2016, Massachusetts experienced a 13 percent increase in motor vehicle fatalities. In order to reduce the number of dangerous accidents on Massachusetts roadways, Senator Montigny's bill will prohibit the use of handheld cell phones and mobile electronic devices while operating a motor vehicle. This life-saving legislation passed the Senate last session but failed to gain approval from the House.

"Distracted driving from unnecessary cell phone use is a major hazard for motorists and pedestrians leading to tragic injuries and loss of life. At a time when hands free technology is readily accessible, affordable and easy to use, there is no reason why we should refrain from requiring this

equipment in order to save lives and also make it easier for law enforcement to uphold roadway safety. As a vocal critic of the significant weaknesses in current law, I look forward to working toward the successful passage of this important piece of legislation so that we may significantly reduce the number of horrific injuries and carnage caused by distracted drivers.” said Senator Mark Montigny.