

May 16, 2017

Representative Triston Cole, Chairman, and
Members of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
Michigan House of Representatives

Re: Support for House Bill 4466 (Howrylak)

Dear Chairman Cole and Members of the Committee:

We are writing on behalf of AARP Michigan to express our support for House Bill 4466, which would prohibit a person from operating a portable electronic device while driving a motor vehicle, unless the device is in hands-free mode. Violation of this requirement would result in a \$250 fine for a first offense, and a \$500 fine for a second or subsequent offense.

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan 501(c)(4) social welfare organization that advocates on issues that matter to people age 50 and over, and their families. AARP has approximately 1.4 million members in Michigan.

Through research conducted by AARP we know that drivers who use handheld devices are 4 times more likely to get into crashes serious enough to injure themselves. Distracted driving accounts for 15-30% of all vehicular crashes, and experts suspect these statistics grossly underestimate the role of distraction in fatal crashes.

This legislation is of particular importance to older adults, who suffer higher motor vehicle fatalities compared with the general population. Among all age groups, someone who is 70 or older is three times as likely as someone age 35-54 to sustain a fatal injury in a crash. Older adults also account for a disproportionate share of fatalities to pedestrians caused by motor vehicles; approximately one in five pedestrian fatalities in Michigan is a person 65 or older.

AARP supports HB 4466 because reducing distracted driving can save lives. As of 2016, 14 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam and the Virgin Islands have banned drivers from using handheld cell phones while driving.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions or if there is any further information we can provide, please feel free to contact Melissa Seifert, AARP Michigan Associate State Director for Government Affairs, at 517-267-8934 or mseifert@aarp.org.

Respectfully,



Lisa Dedden Cooper
Manager of Advocacy



Melissa Seifert
Associate State Director, Government Affairs