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**Testimony to Senate Transportation Committee
In Support of SB25**

January 27, 2021

Sen. Petersen and Committee Members,

Our associations support SB25. The bill expands the limited restriction on utilizing a cell phone while operating a motor vehicle to include critical areas of public safety concerns, school zones and construction zones.

Failing to give full time/attention to driving was the top contributor to Kansas traffic crashes in 2019.¹ This was a contributing circumstance in at least 19% of all crashes.² We know that even when cell phone use is the distraction, either with phone calls or texting, it is not always identified in crashes. Investigations to confirm cell phone use, beyond the admission by the driver, are generally only completed in cases of death or life-threatening injury due to the extensive investigative work and time involved.

In 2019, 1401 crashes occurred in work zones. That is one about every 6.25 hours. They resulted in 7 deaths.³ School zone accident data was not readily available.

Kansas Statewide Distracted Driving Crashes 2014-2019 Summary

	CRASHES				PEOPLE	
	Total	Fatal	Injury	PDO*	Deaths	Injuries
Mobil Phone	3,701	33	1185	2483	34	1614
Other Electronic Devices	1,192	3	373	816	3	501
Other Distractions	8,788	36	2498	6254	38	3657
All distractions	13,681	72	4056	9823	75	5772

*PDO—Property Damage Only

Source: KDOT⁴

In a 2015 National Survey,⁵ 15.3% of the respondents indicated they answer phone calls they receive while driving “always” or “almost always.” Another 26.8% said they sometimes answer while driving. And 56.2% of those answering phone calls while driving said they continue to drive throughout the conversation.

That same survey found 8.2% of the respondents say they “always” or “almost always” make phone calls while driving, with 25.4% saying they “sometimes” make calls while driving. 32.9% of those making calls while driving scroll through saved numbers to dial and 28.8% said they manually dial when making calls.

The survey also found 29.2% of those using phones while driving hold the phone in their hand.

The survey also collected passenger perception of safety when the driver is using a phone while driving. 41.9% of the respondents said the driver’s use of a cell phone for a phone call made them feel very unsafe and

¹ Kansas Transportation Dec 2019 Quick Facts (<http://www.ksdot.org/Assets/wwwksdotorg/pdf/QuickFacts.pdf>)

² Same

³ 2019 Kansas Traffic Crash Facts Book, pdf page 2

<https://www.ksdot.org/Assets/wwwksdotorg/bureaus/burTransPlan/prodinfo/2019factsbook/2019FactsBook.pdf>

⁴ Same, page 17 (pdf page 21)

⁵ Schroeder, P., Wilbur, M., & Peña, R. (2018, March). National survey on distracted driving attitudes and behaviors - 2015 (Report No. DOT HS 812 461). Washington, DC: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

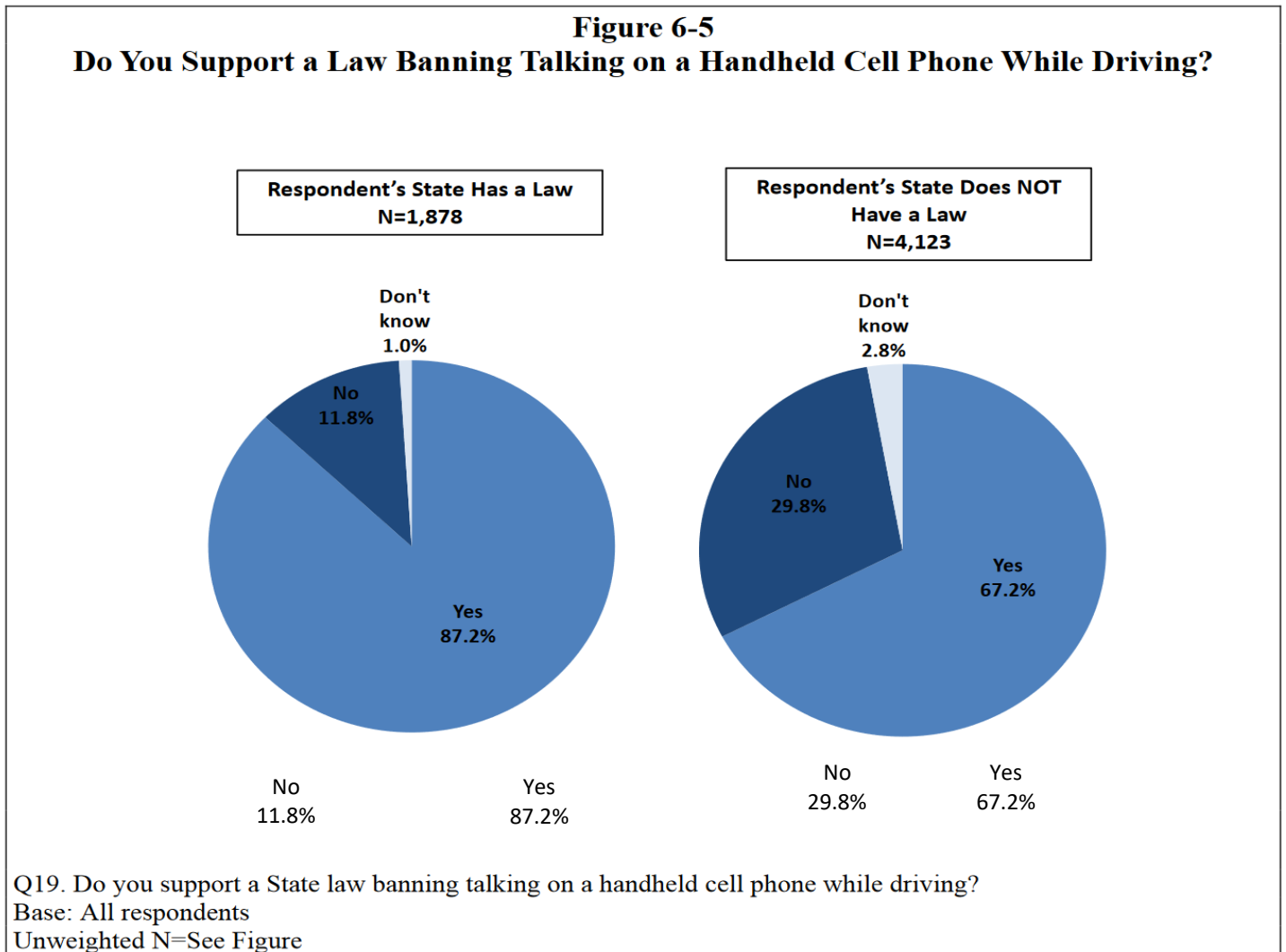
https://www.nhtsa.gov/sites/nhtsa.dot.gov/files/documents/13123-2015_natl_survey_distracted_driving_031418_v5_tag.pdf

another 22.8% said it made them feel somewhat unsafe. But when they were asked about when the driver used the phone handsfree to talk on the cell phone that dropped to 11.1% and 18.9% respectively.

Collectively, the feeling of being unsafe dropped by over half when the phone was used handsfree.

According to Governor’s Highway Safety Administration, as of January 2021, 22 states prohibit all drivers from using handheld cellphones while driving. All are primary enforcement laws. They also report 48 states, ban text messaging for all drivers. All but three have primary enforcement. Of the two states without an all-driver texting ban, one prohibits text messaging by novice drivers.

In states with a law banning handheld use, 87.2% support the law. In states without such law, 67.2% said they would support such law.



We encourage you to recommend SB25 favorably to pass.

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