

The government should not enforce cellphone restrictions on drivers essay sample

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Should the government enforce cellphone restrictions on drivers? This issue has long been debated for years since the first traffic safety law prohibiting the use of these handheld communication gadgets while on the road was applied in New York eight years ago. When dealing with this controversial and debatable topic, there is a need to look at statistics, experts' opinions and the real effects of cellphone use while driving.

In the name of public safety and people's welfare, several laws were passed in the United States imposing cellphone use restrictions on drivers. However it seems that there are a lot of questions hanging in the balance regarding government efforts to legislate cellphone use by drivers. Is legislation on cellular phone use for drivers effective? What are the effects of these laws or legislations on road accident figures?

Despite the aggressive government campaign to ban the use of cellphone while driving, objective facts and statistics seem to refute the dominant notion that these communication devices mainly cause road mishaps. There a lot of evidence and justifications that support the argument that the government should not impose cellphone use restrictions on drivers.

There is still no solid proof backed by objective statistics and studies that would prove that the use of cellphone while driving usually leads to vehicular misfortunes. Most laws and legislations are merely based on the anticipation or untested danger that the use of cellphone can cause road accidents. In some situations, the use of these handheld communication devices can be risky, but such use is not that dangerous in numerous circumstances. The government cannot totally ban the use of cellphone on the road because

there are situations wherein their use are justified, like when waiting at traffic lights, or when trying to convey an urgent message to a family member.

It is also important to look at other activities that can be more distracting and more dangerous than using cellphone like trying to prevent children from fighting, quarrelling or arguing with another passenger, tuning the radio, changing CDs or tapes, eating, reading newspapers, among others. Given these factors that usually distract drivers, it seems unjustified to single out the use of cellphone on the road under all circumstances.

The United States has the most number of cellphone users in the world, with at least 266 million subscribers as of last year (Woloch). The increased reliance on cellphones by drivers led to the passage of laws banning their use on the road. Some assert that the use of cellphone while driving is associated to the following dangers: 1) drivers usually distracted while using these devices; and 2) drivers can become so immersed in their discussions that their capacity to focus on driving is seriously affected (Media). After the passage of the first law banning cellphone use on the road in New York in 2001, there has been intense debate concerning the level of danger and correct nature. Apart from the United States, more and more countries have also adopted the same measure.

In the state of Illinois, it was found that most vehicular accidents were caused by drivers who failed to reduce speed to avoid accident, with 442 cases (Hikevitch). Other accident-causing factors are inappropriate usage of lane with 142 cases; failing to give up right of way, 140; drivers tailing

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vehicles too closely, 113; drivers ignoring traffic regulations, 104; poorly trained drivers, 70; and driving under the influence of drugs and alcohol, 67. There were only reported 46 cases of road mishaps caused by the use of cellphone while driving (Hikevitch).

In some states in the United States, it seems that prohibiting cellphone use is not enough, as legislators in the State of North Carolina plan to make it a criminal offense to send text messages while driving (Romoser). Should the law be passed, violators would not just be slapped with fines, but could face criminal complaint and possible imprisonment as well. Last year, California joined other states in imposing cellphone use restrictions on drivers. With the passage of the law, California drivers will be obligated to use hands-free gadget to talk on a cellular phone (Levin). Other states that apply the same traffic safety law are the District of Columbia, Washington, Utah, Connecticut, New Jersey, and New York. However, there are two groups of people that agree about the use of hands-free devices. One group supported the use of the device, while another group called for its abolition.

From the outset, the government should not intervene in this issue, because the use of cellphone is strictly a private matter. Do the people need a new law to stop the practice of using cellphone on the road? The answer should be in the negative because there is already a law that seeks to penalize reckless or inattentive driving. Unfortunately in some states even the use of hands-free device is banned, and what is more frustrating is that there are groups of people who urge the government to intervene.

The people no longer need a new law or legislation relating to the use of cellphone while driving. In almost all countries in the world, laws are passed to prevent reckless or inattentive driving and punish reckless drivers. As stated above, there are other activities that can be as dangerous as using a cellphone while driving. If someone is driving precariously due to unfortunate use of this communication device, the laws to take legal action already exist. It is now the duty of police enforcers to implement the existing laws whenever there is a violation.

Furthermore, prohibiting cellphone use by drivers will be unenforceable (Ebary Inc. 112). This is because the law will simply be a police enforcer's word against a driver's. For example, motorists who try to use hands-free devices will have a lot of excuses to avoid being accused of using cellphone while driving. They can simply claim to be talking to themselves or singing to their favorite music.

Instead of looking at the negative effects of cellphone use on the road, it seems appropriate to know its advantages to road safety. The use of these communication devices can be used to improve traffic enforcement and safety. For instance, professionals should be allowed to call the office rather than take the road carelessly in an attempt to reach their destination on time. Also, motorists now use cellphones to report road mishaps and tip traffic enforcers to others driving recklessly. And finally, the government has no right to intervene so palpably in people's freedoms and civil liberties. It is reckless, inattentive and bad driving that kills people and causes accidents, not the use of cellphones while driving.

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