

J-Challenge 3 - EDITORIAL

Brenna Jones

In this digital day and age, everyone has a cell phone. They are crucial factors in business communication and social interaction, but cell phones also serve as distractions when behind the wheel. Missouri has a law that prohibits texting and driving, but it only applies to people under the age of 21.

While this might aid in the dissuasion of texting and driving, it only eliminates a fraction of the problem. Contrary to popular belief, according to NBC, a study by AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety concluded that 19 to 24-year-olds are actually the most likely to drive while on their phones. If this age group is the main perpetrator, having a law that doesn't even apply to it does not make sense.

The real question is: would a law even help? Most other U.S. states such as Illinois and Arkansas have banned texting and driving completely, and while this has been proven to be effective, it is not minimizing the problem. A 2017 New York Times article about California's distracted driving law details other ways to handle the issue such as equipping more cars with crash-prevention technology. Because the problem is so widespread and deeply ingrained into our society, a simple law will not completely fix it. If lawmakers cannot stop texting and driving at the source, at least they can ensure that vehicles are prepared to protect their drivers.

In addition to a ban on texting and driving, Missouri could also implement regulations on vehicles in order to ensure that they are up-to date on their crash-prevention technology. An article from CNBC says a study determined "the rate of single-vehicle, sideswipe and head-on crashes was 11 percent lower in vehicles with [crash-prevention] warning systems," and that, "the collision avoidance technology cut the rates of injury crashes of the same type by 21 percent."

Of course, a law banning texting and driving in Missouri wouldn't hurt, but it should not be the only solution applied to the problem. It is a first step in a long process to make the roads a safer place.