



Florida Sheriffs Support Making Texting While Driving as a Primary Offense

You see it every day. At a stop light, at a stop sign, while a person is cruising in the lane next to you. You have seen cars veer, hit curbs, and steer quickly back into their lane.

Texting while driving is a nationwide problem and Florida is no different. However, there is still a big difference between Florida and most other states—Florida is one of five states that only enforces the crime as a secondary offense.

In 2013, the Legislature enacted a law to make texting while driving a secondary offense, punishable as a nonmoving traffic violation and a \$30 fine. A secondary offense is very difficult to enforce unless the driver has committed another traffic infraction. Many states have strict laws on texting while driving:

- Fourteen states have banned the use of all handheld devices by drivers of vehicles
- Nearly all states have a ban on young drivers (18 years old and under) from any cell phone usage

Texting while driving has become an increasing danger to all drivers that has resulted in approximately 431,000 drivers being injured in accidents during the 2017 calendar year, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. This problem will only continue unless the Legislature enacts serious legislation to address the issue of texting while driving.

Florida must begin to take a holistic approach to address this program. This includes more public awareness with prevention campaigns focused on our youth, but making texting while driving a primary offense is also essential because it will allow law enforcement to enforce the law and save lives in the process.

Support HB 33 by Rep. Toledo & SB 90 by Sen. Perry

