



## Senate Press Office

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## Government Bans - A Slippery Slope

By Sen. Bill Heath



BREMEN - (Dec. 1, 2009) - The new trend sweeping across state legislatures nationwide is banning cell phone use while operating a car. Seven states and the District of Columbia have completely banned cell phone use while driving and nearly every other state in the Union has considered some form of this law. In examining this trend, a disturbing truth becomes apparent: people approve of government thinking and making basic choices for them.

While it is not the government's role to make common sense choices for individuals, we do need laws on the book to protect public safety. For example, within the Georgia Code is a law that states a driver must exercise due care in operating a motor vehicle on the highways of Georgia. Engaging in any actions which distract the driver from the safe operation of a motor vehicle is illegal. This means that you can be ticketed for texting and talking on the cell phone if you are clearly not paying attention to the road. This law combined with common sense, should be an adequate solution to the problem of distracted drivers causing accidents. We do not need any more unnecessary laws in the books that will fly in the face of those who believe that personal responsibility is a virtue of the individual and not a function of government.

The government is not responsible for educating the populace about common sense. It is the job of a parent or guardian to teach their children personal responsibility and accountability. If the state banned operating a cell phone and texting while driving, why not ban using a GPS system, tuning the radio, eating, or having unrestrained pets within reach of the driver? Disciplining your child for talking too loudly or digging in your purse for change for the toll would become against the law as well. These are all things the government trusts you to keep under control, so why do we need a new law to keep cell phone operation at limited use? It is a frightening slippery slope for state government. We do not need cell phone and texting restrictions to become a catalyst for other, frivolous limits on our behavior.

With the state of the national economy, we watch as Washington shovels out trillions in taxpayer money for bailouts, pork barrel projects and bureaucratic government programs, of which we never see a dime. We should be focused on the American taxpayers who vote us into office and expect us to represent them.

We need to get Americans working again. We should be focused on how to help them move forward into more prosperity and a better job market. This is not the time for needless laws that take resources away from the limited time we have to make a difference in our great state.

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