

Use of Hands Free Device and Texting While Driving

Whereas: American Automobile Association (AAA) study ranks Florida among the worst states for teenage traffic fatalities. The majority of people killed in teen crashes are passengers and other drivers, not teen drivers. There are 974,000 vehicles on the road at any given daylight moment being driven by someone using a cell phone.

Whereas: Ninety eight percent of Americans believe they are safe drivers yet 72% are guilty of driving while distracted. This includes talking on a cell phone, snacking and engaging in conversation with other passengers. Distorted driving causes 80% of all accidents. The use of technology coupled with a need to be available at all times is increasing the frequency and severity of distracted driving accidents. Using a cell phone, email or electronic device is one of the most dangerous distractions for drivers. There are two dangers associated with driving and cell phone use, including text messaging. First, drivers must take their eyes off the road while dialing. Second, people can become so absorbed in their conversations that their ability to concentrate on the act of driving is severely impaired, jeopardizing the safety of vehicle occupants and pedestrians.

Whereas: Using cell phones while driving is a very risky behavior with significant impact on crashes. According to recent teen driving research by SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions) and Liberty Mutual Insurance Group, instant and text messaging while driving leads the list as the biggest distraction while driving for teens. Text messaging and using MP3 players caused drivers to leave their lanes 10% more often. Texting alone caused drivers to cross the center line or left their lane roughly 10% more often. Reaction times deteriorated by 35% while texting worse than alcohol at the legal limit which is 12% slower. A study by the Harvard Center for Risk Analysis estimates that 6 percent of crashes are due to cell phones, resulting in 2,600 deaths and 12,000 serious injuries per year; now therefore be it

Resolved: The Florida PTA urges the Legislature to require the use of a hands free device with cell phones, while operating a moving vehicle; and be it further

Resolved: The Florida PTA urges the Legislature to ban the practice of texting while operating a moving vehicle.

Teen Driving

Whereas: Teen driving is by far the leading cause of death among American youth and no other hazard comes close to claiming as many teenage lives. Each year, over 6,000 teens are killed and 300,000 are injured nationwide due to teen driving incidents.

Whereas: The top three (3) areas in the nation for teen driving fatalities are all in Florida, where the Tampa Bay area is the nation's deadliest; followed by the Orlando and Jacksonville metropolitan areas.

Whereas: On average, for every teen driver fatality, there are two (2) additional victims who also perish in the accident – typically the teen's passengers and often the motorists in other vehicles.

Whereas: The youngest and most inexperienced drivers are at highest risk, and these youths (15 to 17-year-olds) accounted for the greatest number of traffic fatalities between 2003 and 2007 (according to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety/IIHS). Risk is highest at age 16, when the crash rate per miles driven is twice as high as it is among 18- to 19-year-olds.

Whereas: The 15-17 year old age bracket also causes more fatal car accidents than any other demographic group. These startling statistics have led state policymakers to develop Graduated Drivers Licensing (GDL) systems that gradually build up new drivers to full-fledged driving privileges. The enforcement of a stricter GDL for Florida coupled with mandatory Drivers Education and Defensive Driving would save many thousands of young lives.

Whereas: The leading causes of teen traffic accidents can be dramatically reduced by the judicious combination of mandatory Driver's Education programs and Defensive Driving programs as well as a stronger Graduated Driver's License system for Florida.

Whereas: Parental involvement is vital in each step of their teen's driving education and it plays a pivotal role in their development as safe drivers, just as it does in their academic advancement

Resolved: The Florida PTA will support mandatory Drivers Education and Defensive Driving so that our young drivers have the tools and knowledge to enable them to drive with caution and react appropriately to road hazards thus avoiding potential traffic accidents, injuries and fatalities; and be it further resolved

Resolved: The Florida PTA urges the legislature to support a GDL that provides for an intermediate license at age 16 only with the successful completion of a sanctioned Drivers Education course as well as a Defensive Driving course to ensure that teens are equipped to handle and react safely to the many challenges they will face on our busy roads. An Intermediate License will be in effect for two (2) years from the date of licensure. The GDL then provides for a full (senior) license at age 18, with the privileges of driving after 11pm and be it further resolved

Resolved: The Florida PTA provide information and programs to help teens become responsible drivers and to stress the importance of the parental role in the Graduated Driver's License Program.

Proposed Resolution Combining Florida PTA Leadership and Convention Submitted by the Streamlining Committee

Whereas: Florida PTA conducted three surveys offered to all members to state their opinion regarding combining Florida PTA Convention and Leadership into one event to be held during the summer months and the outcome of the surveys showed 87% in favor of combining the two events; and

Whereas: Analysis of the survey data revealed more pros than cons on the question of combining Convention and Leadership Conference, and indicated that a lack of adequate funding to attend both events was a prevalent concern, especially during these economic times; and

Whereas: Many local units chose Leadership for training because of the opportunity for training over Convention when funding was not available for both; and

Whereas: Adopting Florida PTA platform items in the summer months would allow members the opportunity to visit their Legislators before the start of the session and allow a longer campaign to get particular bill or bills filed. It would also offer the members the fuller picture of how to create a platform item, see its way through the convention body and carry it to the Legislators. This would lend to a greater understanding of the legislative process and might increase participation in advocacy; and

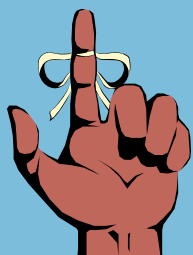
Whereas: A review of prior Conventions shows there is enough time to conduct business as well as having workshops. In 2007, out of a total of 8.75 hours of scheduled meetings there was approximately two hours of business.

Whereas: Leadership has consistently had more members in attendance than Convention; therefore, more members could be included in the business session(s) of the Florida PTA: now, therefore, be it

Resolved: That it is the sense of this convention body that Florida PTA should combine convention and Leadership into one event, and

Resolved: That the Florida PTA Board develop and present to the 2010 Convention body such bylaws amendments as may be necessary to combine Leadership and Convention.

The complete text of these resolutions, including all documentation Supporting each whereas clause is available on the Florida PTA website at <http://www.floridapta.org/legislation.htm>



Save the Date
Leadership Conference 2010
Innisbrook Resort and Golf Club
July 16th-18th, 2010
Visit the Florida PTA website www.floridapta.org for more details

