Florida Atlantic University
Student Government
Boca Raton House of Representatives
5th Legislative Session
BRHR-11-04
"Save Lives, Stop Texting and Driving in Florida"

Author(s): Alan J. Pollock
Sponsor(s): Alan J. Pollock
Boris Bastidas

WHEREAS: According to research from the University of North Texas Health Science Center, which examined nationwide traffic accident data from 2002 to 2007, sixteen thousand one hundred and forty one (16,141) traffic deaths were attributed to texting while driving, and;

WHEREAS: According to statistics produced by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHSTA), nearly Six thousand (6,000) people died in 2008 and more than half a million were injured in crashes involving distracted or inattentive drivers, and;

WHEREAS: A recent NHTSA report showed that (5,474) people were killed and a staggering 448,000 were injured nationally in 2009 in distracted driving accidents. Out of those numbers, 995 distracted driving deaths and 24,000 injuries were traced directly to cell phone use, and;

WHEREAS: In 2008 A truck driver in Polk County killed two women when he was texting on the road, ran a red light and hit ten (10) cars. One of the women, Heather Hurd, was on the way to plan their wedding at Walt Disney World. Florida Highway Patrol reported that the truck driver was so distracted that he never hit his brakes, and;

WHEREAS: State Lawmakers have introduced bills aimed at making texting while driving illegal in Florida. The bills, nicknamed ‘Heathers Law’, have been resubmitted every session since the accident in 2008 but to this date Florida legislators have not passed any laws prohibiting texting while driving, and;

WHEREAS: In March of 2010 Chelsea Murphy of Naples, FL was hit by a driver who was too busy texting to see her crossing the street. Chelsea was pregnant and only 19 years old. It was the first day she had moved out on her own into a new apartment and had aspirations of joining the marines, and;

WHEREAS: A British study by the RAC foundation discovered that texting while driving impairs driving skills more than being drunk or on drugs. Drivers had a tendency to drive out of their lanes and drift into another more often while texting. The study found that texting behind the wheel impairs drivers' reaction times by over one-third (thirty five (35) percent) according to

CODING: Words strikene are deletions; words underlined are additions.
a study carried out at the Transport Research Laboratory on behalf of the RAC Foundation. This was worse than being at the legal drink-drive limit (twelve (12) percent slower) and driving under the influence of cannabis (twenty one (21) percent slower). Drivers who are sending and receiving texts while driving must take their eyes off the road an average of 4.6 of every 6.0 seconds of drive time in order to accomplish the task. This means that these texting drivers are only watching the road and operating their vehicles at roughly twenty five (25) percent of their capacity, and;

WHEREAS: Car and Driver magazine conducted an experiment to measure reaction delays caused by texting while driving and compared the results to reaction delays caused by having a few drinks. The results were startling: In several instances, drivers’ reaction times were worse when they were sending text messages (while sober) than while they were driving with elevated blood-alcohol levels, and;

WHEREAS: A study in California discovered that a statewide texting ban has reduced the total number of text messages sent by Seventy (70) Percent, suggesting that an overwhelming majority of people who send text messages are doing so while they are behind the wheel, and;

WHEREAS: Florida has no laws banning the use of hand-held or hands-free cell phones while driving. A bill to ban texting while driving didn't make it through the legislature last year. Currently there are three (3) bills filed in the Florida legislature (H.B. 79 S.B. 158 & S.B. 80). These bills would make it a secondary violation to use a "wireless communication device" while operating a motor vehicle and are aimed at reducing car accidents, injuries and deaths as well as medical care and insurance costs, and;

WHEREAS: Thirty seven five (35) States, Washington D.C., and Guam have enacted some form of a ban on texting while driving but Florida still remains one of few states without any bans on texting while driving, NOW;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That the students of Florida Atlantic University's (FAU) Boca Raton campus recognize the dangers of texting while driving and urge State Lawmakers to keep the citizens of the state of Florida safe and pass a law banning texting while driving, and;

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the legislative branches of the Student Governments of; The University of Florida, Florida State University, The University of Central Florida, The University of South Florida, The University of North Florida, The University of West Florida, Florida Gulf Coast University, The University of Miami, New College of Florida, and Florida International University, and;

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That a copy of this resolution be forwarded to local State Representatives Joseph Abruzzo, Lori Berman, Mack Bernard, Jeff Clemens, Bill Hager, Mark S. Pafford, Irving Slosberg, Ari Porth, Martin D Kiar, and;

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That a copy of this resolution be forwarded to local State Senators Ellyn S. Bogdanoff, Eleanor Sobel, Maria L. Sachs, Jeremy Ring, Gwen Margolis, and;

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THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That a copy of this resolution be forwarded to Governor Rick Scott, Attorney General Pam Bondi, Chancellor Frank T. Brogan, and FAU Chief of Police Charles Lowe.
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Alincy – Yes
Amirato – Absent
Anastasi – No
Arsolino – Yes
Baptiste – Yes
Becker – Yes
Berichi – No
Blouin – Yes
Capata – Absent
Coicou – Yes
Diljohn – Absent
Dumas – Yes
Ellison – Absent
Fritz – Yes
Gorry – Absent
Grider – No
Hasan – Absent
Lupo – No
Maher – Absent
Massetti – Absent
Montes – Yes
Phillips – Yes
Pollock – Yes

Tepper – Yes
Varela – Yes
Ward – Absent
Wu – Yes
Bastidas – Yes

BRHR-11-04 PASSED on this 18th day of February, 2011 by a vote of 15 YES and 4 NO

Signature – House Speaker
Boris Bastidas
Legislation Signature Sheet

This Bill / Resolution # BHAR-11-04 passed / failed on this 18th day of
February, 2011 by a vote of 15 yes, 4 no, 0 abstain

moved by Pollock and seconded by Montes.

Signature - House Speaker: ~

This Bill / Resolution is hereby enacted / vetoed on this 21st day of February
2011. Signature - Campus Governor: ~

Allison Gentry

This Bill / Resolution is hereby enacted / vetoed on this 20th day of July
2011. Signature - Student Body President: ~

Golen

For All Legislation, Pursuant to University Regulation 1006:

This Bill / Resolution is approved / sent back for reconsideration on this 25th
day of March, 2011.

Signature - Vice President for Student Affairs: ~

Dr. Charles Brown

This Bill / Resolution is received and recorded by the Student Government Student Court on this
24th day of March, 2011.