

Senator Lloyd K Smucker
13th Senatorial District
Room 351, Main Capitol
Senate Box 203013
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120-3013
September 5, 2014

Dear Sir:

A comprehensive bill needs to be introduced effectively addressing all the high-rate of accidents; 'caused by bad-driving behaviors', in addition to curbing drunk driving.

In 2011 Pennsylvania had the third highest number of speeding fatalities in the nation. We are currently the only state in the Nation that does **NOT** authorize the use of radar, outside of the PA State Police. The use of this tool must be broadening to allow all law enforcement agencies access to (use) radar within the Commonwealth. At 70 MPH a vehicle covers the distance of a football field (100 yards) in three seconds. This requires a drivers' full attention.

Talking on a cell phone or using other hand-held devices while driving (perhaps the most dangerous type of multitasking) leaves people as cognitively impaired as if they had multiple alcoholic drinks.

Pennsylvania's current seat belt law; which is a secondary law requirement, should be a moved to a **primary** offense. Wearing seat belts should become a state law.

DUI checkpoints, speeding enforcements, and all other aggressive driving details are attempts at curtailing bad-driving behaviors...which are the most common vehicle/driver incidents, the most costly and the deadliest. These enforcement details are set-up to catch offenders, improve highway safety, reducing accidents, injuries, loss in property damages and deaths. There should **NEVER** be any advertising of any types thru any media outlets, including traffax reports. There should not be any releasing on any current or proposed driving enforcement(s) which would inform the public of locations, dates, and times of such enforcements.

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Releasing of such information; by any news media outlet, should call for civil penalties of \$5,000 fine for first offense and \$25,000 fine for repeat offenders. Sending this aggressive and clear picture would be a definite deterrent. Law enforcement don't advertise any sting operations when it comes to narcotics or other problems like burglaries, and red light runners within their communities so why advertise driver checkpoints??

In the interest of law enforcement (police officers) safety and tinted windows also need be addressed. The inspection mechanic (should) be required to sign off indicating yearly inspection of said vehicle in fact passes guidelines of tinted window allowances mandated in current PA vehicle inspection code. If driver is pulled over and tinted windows do not concur with law, vehicle should be immediately taken off the road, impounded for a specified time period, fines plus court costs and impounding fees be imposed. I would be leery of approaching a vehicle with dark tinted windows where you couldn't see any of its occupants.

I am not aware of current Pennsylvania statistics but Nationwide, Motor Vehicle Accidents (MVA) costs \$871 **Billion** yearly of which alcohol-related DUI's account for \$199 billion, or 23%. Crashes involving a speeding vehicle account for \$210 billion, or 24%. Distracted driving (which includes hand-held devices) account for \$129 billion, or 15%. Preventable fatalities and injuries attributable to occupants who were not wearing seat belts accounted for \$72 billion, or eight percent. These four 'causes' (DUI related, speeding related, distracted driving related and non-seat belt use related) account for 70% of MVA yearly costs.

For well over 30 years public campaigns have been targeting DUI education but has proven to be ineffective, and DUI and repeat offender rates are still frightening high!

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While the economic and societal costs of crashes are staggering, it clearly demonstrates that investments in safety are worth every penny used to reduce frequency and severity of these (horrific) tragic events.

Regarding DUI's, the very first offense of any DUI (alcohol and/or non-alcohol) offense should be classified as a felony. Impounding of vehicle would be a deterrent for offenders.

Civil forfeiture action is necessary against all repeat offenders who are using their vehicle in such a manner which causes for removal of that vehicle from their possession because it was used as an instrument of a crime.

If these people who are arrested for DUI had misused a firearm instead of a vehicle would we give them their firearm back? So, why are we giving vehicles back to the (repeat) convicted DUI driver??

Perhaps District Attorney Stedman made the most important observation. He stated: "We tend to discuss DUI in broad statistics, but we have to remember that each victim of alcohol-related driving was a living breathing person and not just a number. As a result, we have a deep obligation to make sure we are doing all we can to deter DUI."

Everyone must remember that operating any motorized vehicle is a privilege and **NOT** a right. Addressing bad- driving behaviors is long overdue and calls for effective concrete and constitutionally sound action across the board.

I am sorry I could not make the meeting planned for community input on this issue but please make sure this letter gets read and is entered into the record.

Respectfully submitted,

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