

HCS HB 293 -- FAIR FARE PASSENGER SAFETY ACT

SPONSOR: Higdon

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Crime Prevention and Public Safety by a vote of 9 to 1. Vote "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Rules-Legislative Oversight by a vote of 12 to 0.

This bill establishes the Fair Fare Passenger Safety Act of 2017, which prohibits any person operating a motor vehicle on the highways or other public roadways of this state for compensation for the transportation of one or more passengers from using a hand-held electronic wireless communications device to send or write a text message or electronic message. The person is also prohibited from making or taking part in a telephone call by means of a hand-held electronic wireless communication device.

The provisions of the bill do not apply to a person operating:

- (1) An authorized emergency vehicle; or
- (2) A moving motor vehicle while using a hand-held device to report illegal activity, summon medical or other emergency help, prevent injury to a person or property, or relay information between a transit or for-hire operator and that operator's dispatcher when the device is permanently affixed to the vehicle.

A violation of these provisions must be deemed an infraction and must be deemed a moving violation that is assessed points.

Any city or county must have the authority to adopt ordinances or regulations that are equivalent to, but not more restrictive than, the provisions of the bill.

This bill is similar to HB 2126 (2016).

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that this will reduce the amount of distracted driving people do, and it is important for those who have people in their charge to not be distracted when they drive. This would help protect our most vulnerable citizens, who often use Uber, Lyft, or taxis to get around.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Higdon; Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen; Missouri Nurses Association; AAA Auto Club of Missouri; Missouri Academy of Family Physicians; Missouri Department of Transportation; Missouri Bicycle and Pedestrian Federation; State Farm Insurance Companies; American Insurance Association; Missouri Insurance Coalition; and Edward

Shepard, ABATE Missouri.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.