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For Immediate Release

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Representative Kane supports hands-free cell phone driving bill to improve road safety

BOSTON – Saying it will improve safety and reduce fatalities on Massachusetts roadways, State Representative Hannah Kane, R-Shrewsbury, joined with her colleagues to support legislation mandating hands-free cell phone use while driving.

House Bill 3793 bans the use of a hand-held phone while operating a motor vehicle, and imposes fines ranging from \$100 to \$500 for violations. The bill was approved by the House of Representatives on a vote of 155-2 on May 15.

Current state law prohibits drivers under the age of 18 from using cell phones while operating a motor vehicle. However, adults can use hand-held devices to make calls while driving, provided they keep one hand on the steering wheel at all times.

House Bill 3793 would ban the use of hand-held cell phones for all drivers, while still allowing for the use of Bluetooth devices and other voice-activated technology. The bill provides exceptions for drivers who use their phone to report an emergency or for viewing GPS navigation, and also allows drivers to use a single tap or swipe to activate or deactivate their device's hands-free setting.

Under the House bill, violators would be fined \$100 for a first offense, \$250 for a second offense, and \$500 for all subsequent offenses. Violations would not be considered a surchargeable offense for insurance purposes.

House Bill 3793 also builds upon an existing state law, passed in 2000, that requires police to note the race of the driver when issuing a traffic citation or warning. The bill requires this data to be collected, analyzed, and included in an annual report issued by the Secretary of Public Safety and Security to ensure that law enforcement officers are not engaging in racial profiling.

The bill also requires the Registry of Motor Vehicles, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, and the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security to implement an annual public awareness campaign regarding the dangers of distracted driving.

The bill now heads to the Senate for further action.

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