



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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August 7, 2009**

**At-Large Summit County Councilman Jon Poda  
to Introduce Text Messaging Driving Ban**

At-Large Summit County Council member Jon Poda is working to introduce legislation that will prohibit text messaging while individuals are operating motor vehicles. Similar legislation has already been enacted in several states on a county-level, as well as in the City of Cleveland. As more and more studies show that viewing or sending text messages while driving put motorists at an extremely increased risk for accidents, Poda said he feels the legislation could help curb these risks and make the county roadways safer.

“If passing a text messaging ban can assist in saving even one single life then this effort will have been a success,” Poda said. “Many states have already adopted such laws and Ohio is behind the times on this issue.”

A July 27, 2009 study released by the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute shows that drivers involved in the research project were more than 23 times more likely to crash when text messaging than drivers who were not. Additional research shows that drivers with a .08 blood alcohol level (the legal limit in Ohio) have about a four times greater risk of an accident than non-impaired drivers. The problem of text messaging while driving is particularly dangerous for younger drivers as studies show that 21 percent of fatal car crashes involving teenagers were the result of cell phone use.

“When text messaging has been shown to be possibly more dangerous than someone driving while intoxicated, it is a clear sign to me that something should be done,” Poda said. “This is an effort to ensure the personal freedoms of our residents, not to take them away. In my mind, potentially getting killed senselessly by a driver who was text messaging and not paying attention to the road is no freedom at all.”

Poda said that further research on the issues on fine amounts and enforcement is needed before legislation will be introduced, but said he intends to present it sometime soon in the next few weeks. Summit County Council meetings take place at 6 p.m. on the 7<sup>th</sup> Floor of the Ohio Building, located at 175 S. Main St. in Akron, OH.

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