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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 234

Offered February 11, 2002

Requesting the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles, working in conjunction with the Department of State Police and other law-enforcement agencies, to develop a data collection methodology that will make it possible to create a better reporting mechanism to accurately capture the contributing factors in crashes resulting from drivers who are inattentive or distracted, or both.

Patron—Norment

Unanimous consent to introduce

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles, in direct response to Senate Joint Resolution No. 336, requested George Mason University's Center for Advancement of Public Health to conduct a study of the "dangers imposed by distracted drivers"; and

WHEREAS, the Crash Investigation Team of Virginia Commonwealth University's Transportation Safety Training Center conducted a similar research project known as the "Driver Inattention and Driver Distraction Study"; and

WHEREAS, these studies have provided a wealth of valuable information, such as pointing out that crash data collection methods have been inconsistent, unreliable, and unverifiable on a local and nationwide scale; and

WHEREAS, the need exists to develop standardized data collection methods to determine the scope of the issue and those behaviors that may or may not be detrimental to public safety and warrant legislative action; and

WHEREAS, these studies further identified a current need to clearly define driver inattention and distraction factors in order to promote consistency in data collection and analysis; and

WHEREAS, driver inattention may be attributed to fatigue, medication, etc., and driver distraction is usually categorized by activity outside or inside the vehicle, or both, such as passengers, road maps, pets, cellular telephones, pedestrians, etc, however, this categorization of inattention and distraction is not consistent throughout the transportation industry; and

WHEREAS, for those factors that are classified as driver inattention or distraction, or both, these studies indicate that there is no one factor that is significantly more detrimental than the other; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles, working in conjunction with the Department of State Police and other law-enforcement agencies, be requested to develop a data collection methodology that will make it possible to create a better reporting mechanism to accurately capture the contributing factors in crashes resulting from drivers who are inattentive or distracted, or both; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles be requested to provide an annual report of the data collected on crashes resulting from distracted drivers, inattentive drivers, or both, using the newly developed data collection methodology to the General Assembly through the Senate Committee on Transportation, the House Committee on Transportation, and the Division of Legislative Services; and, be it

RESOLVED FINALLY, That the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles' modified reporting mechanisms provide information necessary to assess the true cause of the crashes and determine if a legislative solution is needed.

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