AN ACT CONCERNING DISTRACTED WALKING.

SUMMARY

This bill prohibits a pedestrian from crossing a public road while viewing a mobile electronic device unless the device is being used:

1. solely to communicate about an emergency situation with an emergency response operator, hospital, physician’s office, health clinic, ambulance company, or fire or police department; or

2. by a peace officer, firefighter, emergency medical responder or technician, or paramedic while performing their official duties within the scope of his or her employment.

The bill defines a “mobile electronic device” as any hand-held or portable electronic equipment capable of providing data communication between two or more people. It includes mobile telephones, text messaging or paging devices, personal digital assistants, laptop computers, video game equipment, digital video disk players, and equipment that takes or transmits digital photographs. It also defines “viewing” as looking in the direction of the mobile electronic device’s screen.

The bill subjects violators to a warning for a first violation and a $20 fine for subsequent violations.

Under the bill, motor vehicle operators must still exercise due care to avoid colliding with these pedestrians and give reasonable warning by sounding a horn, just as existing law requires them to do for certain other pedestrians, such as those using crosswalks and sidewalks.

Lastly, the bill makes technical changes.
EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2019

COMMITTEE ACTION
Transportation Committee

Joint Favorable
Yea  21  Nay  15  (03/20/2019)