Bill No.: HB-7126

Title: AN ACT CONCERNING THE AWARD OF DOUBLE OR TREBLE DAMAGES TO AN INJURED PARTY IN A CIVIL ACTION RESULTING FROM CERTAIN TRAFFIC VIOLATIONS.

Vote Date: 3/20/2019
Vote Action: Joint Favorable
PH Date: 2/22/2019
File No.: 

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SPONSORS OF BILL:
Judiciary Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

Drivers using their handheld devices is still a prevalent, dangerous, and possibly life threatening situation since when the legislature first addressed this issue in 2005. This bill is meant to curb the use of handheld devices while driving by making the driver who is using their handheld device pay possibly two to three times more in damages to the injured party. This bill allows the injured party in a civil action to recover double or treble damages from an injury where the offender was using a handheld device while driving.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:
None Expressed

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Connecticut Trial Lawyers Association: CTLA testified that many drivers are injured and killed because of people using handheld devices and the number of teens using their handheld devices while driving is around 35%. They also state the necessity, in their opinion, to update laws to include distracted driving by using handheld devices in the same category of liability as drunk driving, reckless driving, speeding, and passing in a no passing zone.

A number of people testified about the perils of using handheld devices while driving. These people used personal anecdotes to demonstrate the effect of distracted driving had on their lives and why there needs to be the increased damage award potential that this bill provides:
Connor M. Bellair, 14, and Andrew Vernon, 15, who attend Cheshire High School, both wrote about how distracted driving affects teenagers and the importance for the passage of this bill.

- Candace Lightner, Arlington, VA
- Vincent Carbone, Monroe, CT
- Kelsey Lisk, Milford, CT

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

None Expressed

Reported by: Logan Durant  
Date: March 26, 2019