

Submitted April 17, 2023

Dear Members on the Special Committee on Public Policy,

We write to you today on behalf of the members of the Community Mobility Committee of the City of St. Louis in support of Senate Bill 56. This bill represents a critical step in making streets and sidewalks across Missouri safer for people walking, biking, rolling, and driving. Your action on this bill will save lives and make Missourians safer.

The Community Mobility Committee of the City of St. Louis is an advisory group made up of residents who are committed to creating a safer, more accessible experience for people who are getting around by walking, transit, biking, and other modes of transportation. In our meetings and our work, we hear from residents across the City of St. Louis who are afraid to drive across town, to ride their bike to the park, or to cross the street in their own neighborhood. Reckless drivers, focused on their phones, have killed 801 people in Missouri between 2012 and 2021 and 59% of those people killed were not the driver, but an innocent victim including passengers, pedestrians, or other drivers (Hands-Free Missouri).

Passing a law alone does not make people obey it, but prohibiting the use of phones and other devices while driving raises awareness amongst drivers of the dangers of driving while distracted, creates an avenue for consequences for dangerous behavior, and demonstrates that Missourians take safety on the roads seriously. Other states have seen great success with hands-free laws, such as in Georgia where fatalities dropped 7% in the first 18 months after adoption.

Every death due to distracted driving is someone who is missed and loved by their friends, family, and community. Every injury represents a life that is changed forever. We want all Missourians to be able to safely go to work, to school, to their friends, and to be part of the communities that make our state great — and Senate Bill 56 is an important step towards that effort.

Thank you,

Liz Kramer  
Co-Chair, Community Mobility Committee

Christie Holland  
Co-Chair, Community Mobility Committee