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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 02/15/11

SPONSOR Lovejoy LAST UPDATED _____ HB _____

SHORT TITLE Consequences of Texting While Driving Study SM 23

ANALYST Kleats

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY11	FY12	FY13	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
Total		Minimal		Minimal	Non-recurring	Department of Transportation Operating Budget

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Department of Transportation (DOT)

Department of Public Safety (DPS)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Memorial 223 requests the Department of Transportation (DOT) gather data on, study and identify the consequences of texting while driving and requests DOT present recommendations based on the findings of the study to the appropriate interim committee by October 2011.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

SM 23 carries no appropriations and generates no revenue. DOT estimates that it will cost approximately \$15,000 to procure an outside contractor to conduct the study.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The study proposed by SM 23 may not be necessary if House Bill 197 passes. HB 197 seeks to prohibit texting while driving. According to HB 197, a person committing texting while driving is guilty of a misdemeanor and punished according to the guidelines included in the bill. HB 197 extends the definition of homicide by vehicle to include deaths caused by a driver guilty of texting while driving.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

DOT could not complete the study proposed within its existing structure. DOT would have to procure an outside contractor to conduct this study on their behalf.

CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP

SM 23 relates to House Bill 197.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

The study proposed by SM 23 would add to an already substantial body of research on the consequences of texting while driving. As DOT notes, the National Safety Council has already compiled over 30 research studies that confirm cell phone use while driving contributes to numerous driving impairments.

This body of research clearly indicates that driver distraction and texting as a cause of that distraction present a serious and potentially deadly danger to society. The University of North Texas Health Science Center concluded that texting while driving caused 16,141 deaths from 2001 to 2007, while the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration Center for Statistical Analysis indicates over 400,000 were injured in crashes caused by distracted driving in 2009 alone.

Thirty states, the District of Columbia and Guam have banned texting while driving for all drivers. Another ten states prohibit texting while driving either for novice drivers or school bus operators. These states form a large consensus seeking to restrict texting while driving and reduce the negative impact of distracted driving.

It remains unclear whether the study proposed by SM 23 would add any new insight to the discussion.

IK/bym