

Good afternoon. Thank you to Chairman Taylor for inviting me to address the committee today.

I am sure, like me, most motorists have experienced a careless pedestrian using a device while crossing the street or walking near busy roadways. Distracted pedestrians have become a menace to motorists who have little control of a person stepping directly into the path of a moving vehicle. This blatant activity puts walkers, as well as motorists and their passengers at risk. As a result, I have proposed legislation to address the issue of distracted pedestrians and their impact on drivers.

This legislation would create a penalty for:

- Distracted pedestrians who are using an interactive communications device and suddenly leave a curb or other place of safety and walk or run into the path of a vehicle which is so close as to constitute a hazard; and
- Distracted pedestrians who are using an interactive communications device while crossing a roadway at any point other than within a crosswalk, and do not yield the right-of-way to all vehicles upon that roadway.

The problem of distracted walking is a very real and serious issue. Technology has invaded every aspect of our life and people have stopped paying attention to their surroundings, and now stare at small digital screens. People need to pay more attention as too many are being hurt and injured in careless situations. While the below statistics don't reflect distracted walking alone, they do shed light on the dangers pedestrians face.

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention:

- In 2015, 5,376 pedestrians were killed in traffic crashes in the United States;
- 129,000 pedestrians were treated in emergency departments for non-fatal crash related injuries in 2015;
- Most pedestrian deaths occur in urban areas, non-intersection locations, and at night;

The issue has become such a problem that some towns, such as Fort Lee, New Jersey, have banned texting while walking. If caught texting while jaywalking in that town, violators face an \$85 fine. In London, England, some lamp posts have been padded in order to protect the large numbers of people using their mobile devices while walking. Even New York City has lowered the speed limit in some areas as a way to help cut down on the number of pedestrian injuries.

Just last week, NBC News reported that in 2016, nearly 6,000 Americans were killed while walking, according to a new study. Experts say distracted drivers and pedestrians are both to blame.

Both distracted driving and distracted pedestrians create many problems – and I fear that if we don't address these issues, more Pennsylvanians will be harmed. We need to work to create commonsense solutions to discourage this reckless, irresponsible behavior. I believe my legislation is the first step in that process. Thank you.