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Fact Sheet

Senate Bill 33 (Simitian) Teen Driver Cell Phone Use

Summary:

SB 33 would prohibit persons under the age of 18 from using a wireless telephone or a mobile service device while driving, including a handset equipped with a hands-free device. This bill would be effective July 1, 2008.

Need for the bill:

- According to the National Safety Council, **motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of teen fatalities**, accounting for 44% of teen deaths in the U.S.
- The California Highway Patrol has recently collected data that shows that **cell phone use is the number one source of distracted-driver related accidents** in the state.
- Teen drivers are far more likely than older drivers to be involved in accidents because they lack driving experience and tend to take greater risks. They are also more easily distracted. According to Ford Motor Company research, **teen drivers are four times more distracted than adult drivers by cell phone use.**
- Sixteen-year-olds drivers have a crash rate three times more than 17-year-olds, five times greater than 18-year olds and almost ten times greater than drivers age 30-59 (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 2001).
- This bill prohibits inexperienced teen drivers from using cell phones and other mobile service devices (i.e. walkie talkies, pagers, two-way messaging devices, laptops, etc.) while driving for any purpose including gaming and text-messaging.

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