

1 H.203

2 Introduced by Representatives Smith of Derby, Anthony of Barre City,
3 Arrison of Weathersfield, Bartholomew of Hartland, Bartley of
4 Fairfax, Beck of St. Johnsbury, Branagan of Georgia, Burditt of
5 West Rutland, Clifford of Rutland City, Corcoran of
6 Bennington, Demar of Enosburgh, Graham of Williamstown,
7 Hango of Berkshire, Harrison of Chittenden, Higley of Lowell,
8 Labor of Morgan, LaBounty of Lyndon, Lipsky of Stowe,
9 Logan of Burlington, Morgan of Milton, Morris of Springfield,
10 Oliver of Sheldon, Parsons of Newbury, Patt of Worcester,
11 Peterson of Clarendon, Satcowitz of Randolph, Stebbins of
12 Burlington, Surprenant of Barnard, Taylor of Milton,
13 Templeman of Brownington, Toof of St. Albans Town, Torre of
14 Moretown, Walker of Swanton, Williams of Granby, and
15 Wilson of Lyndon

16 Referred to Committee on

17 Date:

18 Subject: Motor vehicles; hand-held devices; distracted driving; texting

19 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to require the
20 Vermont State Highway Safety Office to file written recommendations on
21 how, if at all, the State should modify its approach to the education,

1 enforcement, and conviction of the noncommercial driver's license distracted
2 driving violations.

3 An act relating to a report on distracted driving and options for education,
4 enforcement, and conviction

5 It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

6 Sec. 1. FINDINGS

7 The General Assembly finds that:

8 (1) Distracted driving is any activity that diverts attention from driving,
9 including talking or texting on a portable electronic device.

10 (2) Sending or reading a text could take an individual's eyes off the road
11 for five seconds or more. At 55 miles per hour, that is like an operator driving
12 the length of an entire football field with closed eyes.

13 (3) In 2020, 113 individuals were convicted under 23 V.S.A. § 1095a,
14 1095b, or 1099 (Vermont statutes that prohibit a noncommercial driver's
15 license holder from using a portable electronic device or texting while
16 operating a motor vehicle).

17 (4) In 2020, 3,142 individuals were killed by distracted driving in the
18 United States.

1 Sec. 2. DISTRACTED DRIVING; REPORT

2 (a) The Vermont State Highway Safety Office, in consultation with the
3 Departments of Motor Vehicles and of Public Safety, the Vermont Sheriffs’
4 Association, the Vermont League of Cities and Towns, the Vermont
5 Department of State’s Attorneys and Sheriffs, the Vermont Association of
6 Court Diversion Program and Pretrial Services, and the Vermont Judiciary,
7 shall file written recommendations on how, if at all, the State should modify its
8 approach to the education, enforcement, and conviction of the noncommercial
9 driver’s license distracted driving violations under 23 V.S.A. §§ 1095a, 1095b,
10 and 1099 with the House and Senate Committees on Judiciary and on
11 Transportation on or before January 15, 2024.

12 (b) As part of making any recommendations, the Vermont State Highway
13 Safety Office shall review what is and what is not working to minimize
14 distracted driving in Vermont and other states, especially amongst operators
15 under 18 years of age, and examine:

16 (1) the use of monetary penalties, points, suspensions, revocations, and
17 recalls, including escalations based on the number and location of distracted
18 driving violations;

19 (2) the use of diversion programs and other mandated education; and

20 (3) how to balance education, enforcement, and conviction.

- 1 Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE
- 2 This act shall take effect on passage.