Sample Paper in MLA Format: How Can We Prevent Texting while Driving?

The use of electronic mobile devices, such as smartphones and tablets, is more prevalent than ever before. Smartphones are now a tool that many people use every day for a variety of purposes, including communication, entertainment, and even research. One common use for mobile phones is texting. Text messaging is a simple, quick, and extremely popular way to communicate in the 21\textsuperscript{st} century. Texting becomes dangerous, however, when it is done while driving a vehicle. Distracted driving, including texting while driving, causes an estimated 3,000 deaths annually (“Blueprint”). Since current efforts to curb texting while driving through legislation are proving ineffective, activists should focus their efforts on persuading car manufacturers to install safety devices in new cars that prevent drivers from texting while driving.

Almost every state in the United States of America has some type of distracted driving law on the books. Most are complete bans on texting while driving, although some states have banned all cell phone use while driving (Stim). These laws are intended to prevent people from getting distracted by their phones while driving and prevent accidents. However, the legislation has not been effective. Recent research discussed in a book chapter by Joe Jones, a professor of transportation law, shows “no reduction in the number of accidents caused by texting and driving in states that have a ban” (85). Texting while driving remains a danger; especially for younger drivers. A recent article explained that driving is a skill and drivers should be as focused as possible while operating a vehicle (Jackson 35). The solution may be in new technology that helps drivers stay focused.
Activists working to prevent texting while driving accidents should focus their efforts on convincing people to use some new technologies that are available. In the book, *Cell Phones and Driving*, Alyssa Carducci argues:

New technologies already on the market might resolve the divisive issue without enacting new policies and laws perceived as eroding personal liberty. Software company Zoom-Safer, for example, provides smartphone technologies that prevent texting or emailing while driving and sends auto-reply messages on a driver’s behalf in response to incoming texts or emails. We must make sure that existing laws on the books allow for innovations in this area. (35)

This particular technology is part of the smartphone’s operating system and senses when the phone is inside a moving vehicle using GPS data. Then, the phone prevents the driver from sending text messages, and instead sends automatic replies to incoming messages. Equipping all smartphones with this technology is an important step in reducing the rate of distracted driving.

Another technological solution for activists to support is described in a recent article in *Car and Driver*. Experienced journalist Sue Smith reports, “This new safety device can disable a phone’s texting, emailing, and phoning abilities while the car is on by blocking cellular data signals inside the vehicle” (12). But there are some problems: the device can be unplugged at any time and it affects every person’s phone in the car, not just the driver’s (Smith 13). Technologies such as these are not perfect solutions to the danger of texting while driving, but they are steps in the right direction. Legislation and bans have not worked to prevent distracting driving accidents. Activists should now focus on persuading manufacturers to develop and install safety devices that prevent drivers from texting while driving.

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