

North Carolina loses out on federal money because of lax texting laws

Written by Australian Business

September 20, 2013 /**24-7PressRelease**/ -- It is well known that texting behind the wheel can be dangerous; writing or reading an electronic message while driving can be seriously distracting, taking your eyes and mind off the road. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in 2011 alone, more than 387,000 Americans were injured in [car accidents](#) that involved a distracted driver.

North Carolina has a law that prohibits texting and driving. But is it preventing as many texting and driving accidents as it could be? The federal government, at least, does not seem to think so: the U.S. Department of Transportation recently denied North Carolina a distracted driving grant because its texting laws do not go far enough.

Grant denied due to definitions of "texting" and "driving"

The distracted driving grants were to be awarded to states that had a ban on texting behind the wheel with primary enforcement (meaning a driver can be pulled over solely for texting without any other moving violating being observed by a police officer). North Carolina does have a texting while driving ban with primary enforcement, and was expecting to receive between \$200,000 and \$300,000. However, the Department of Transportation took a hard line approach in interpreting the requirements states needed to meet in order to receive the grant.

Under North Carolina law, motorists may not text or email while driving. Even so, the state lost out on the grant because of two perceived deficiencies in its texting law: drivers are permitted to text or email when their vehicle is stopped, and the ban exclusively applies to cell phones as opposed to all types of mobile electronic devices. In setting up the grant, federal lawmakers defined "driving" as including times when a vehicle is temporarily stopped and envisioned "texting" to also encompass things like surfing the web on a tablet.

The North Carolina Governor's Highway Safety Program had hoped to use the grant to fund a social media campaign aimed at warning younger drivers about the dangers of texting behind the wheel. In addition to North Carolina, 30 other states with primary texting laws missed out on the grant money because of how federal authorities defined "texting" and "driving."

If you have been the victim of a car accident, contact a North Carolina attorney

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North Carolina's texting law may not be strong enough to meet federal expectations, but it does do something to help protect motorists. However, no law can keep all drivers from being distracted behind the wheel. When a distracted driver causes a crash, there are legal remedies available to victims that both help them recover the compensation they need and play an important role in deterring other drivers from texting.

A distracted driver who causes a crash, or his or her insurer, must pay accident victims for their injuries. Such payments commonly include compensation for medical bills, lost wages, and pain and suffering. The proceeds from a [motor vehicle accident](#) lawsuit not only help severely injured victims get on with their lives, they also send an important message that those who cause distracted driving crashes must pay for the consequences of their actions.

If you have been injured in a car accident, get the compensation you need: get in touch with a North Carolina car accident lawyer today.

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