

This State Is Proposing the Harshest Distracted Driving Law in the Nation

It's not just about texting and driving.

A New Jersey bill proposed by two Democratic Assemblymen would ban various activities while driving in addition to using a cell phone.

The bill was proposed by John Wisniewski and Nicholas Chiaravalloti. If passed it would outlaw “any activity, not related to the operation of the vehicle, in a manner that interferes with the safe operation of the vehicle.” That means you would no longer be able to do things like drinking coffee or eating breakfast during your morning commute. Similar laws have previously been passed in Maine and Utah, according to NJ.com. However, the New Jersey bill would implement the harshest—and most expensive—penalties. A first time offender would pay between \$200 and \$400; second time costs between \$400 and \$600; and a third offense would be \$600 to \$800. A third offense, or anything beyond that, also gives authorities the opportunity to suspend a driver's right to operate a vehicle in the state of New Jersey, and they could get three penalty points on their license.

“Studies talk about how distracted driving is the number one cause of accidents,”

Wisniewski told NJ.com. “We ought to be able to stop it.”

The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety is against this measure. “With education and vigorous enforcement of safety belt laws, we saw immediate effects with fewer deaths. We’re not seeing the same kind of immediate safety benefits with education and enforcement of cell phone laws,” a spokesperson for the organization, Russ Rader, told the website. “Addressing distracted driving through new laws is not likely to be an effective approach to make roads safer.”