
Sent: Tuesday, March 21, 2017 9:36 PM
To: Amateur Radio Operators
Subject: SB144 Hearing Results

Here are the results from the House Transportation Committee's hearing today on Senate Bill 144. This bill would have made it illegal for anyone while in a school zone or a road construction zone to operate a motor vehicle while using a wireless communication device, except for law enforcement, emergency traffic and taxi cabs. The bill had made it all the way through the Senate and was then sent to the House for their approval. After several amateur radio operators testified last Thursday asking them to please provide an exemption for amateur radio, we were told that the following amendment would be proposed at today's meeting: ***"The provisions of this section shall not apply to a person operating licensed two-way radio communications equipment including, but not limited to, equipment used in the amateur radio service or the private land mobile radio services"***. This provision would have not only have exempted amateur radio, but would have also exempted businesses, municipalities, and government such as KDOT, which is all completely reasonable. It would not, however exempt CB radio nor FRS radio.

Interestingly, when the amendment was proposed today, the "licensed" part was dropped, thereby also exempting CB and FRS radio. As discussion proceeded, I detected hardly no opposition to this amendment and it was passed with only one dissenting vote. Then as discussion begin on the bill itself, it was apparent that there was quite a bit of confusion on what the bill was actually going to do. When the time for a vote came, SB144 failed to pass and therefore died in the committee. Even with their willingness to include our requested amendment for amateur radio, I was hoping the bill would fail to pass, as it was very badly written and confusing in several areas.

So, I feel comfortable to say that for this legislative session, bills that prohibit talking on cell phones (and other wireless devices) while driving are dead. But I feel certain that they will be back for next year's legislative session. I say this because there are agencies at the federal level such as the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration that are really pushing for all states to strengthen their distracted driving laws, and they even offer federal grants to states who comply.

I want to give big thanks for all who helped with this effort and those who would have helped had you know about it in time. Those of you who were ready to contact your Representative or Senator about this bill can stand down at this time and thanks for your willingness to help out. A special thanks goes to John, KYØC and Brian, KCØBS, who spent most of the day last Thursday at the Capitol visiting with Representatives and Senators on behalf of amateur radio. That initiative along with those who submitted either written or verbal testimony, or just showed up for the count, helped to provide some badly needed education about amateur radio to our lawmakers.

During this process, it became very apparent that the amateur radio community has been remiss in getting the word out to our state elected officials on all of the many ways we as amateur radio operators volunteer our time, equipment and expertise to make Kansans safer, as well as serve as good will ambassadors for our great state. Over the next few months, John, KYØC and I are going to work on some initiatives to help this correct this oversight and as plans develop we will be asking you to join us in this effort.

Thanks Again.

Bob, NØMEI