

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City



THIRTEENTH CONGRESS

First Regular Session

House Bill No. 2732

Introduced by REP. BENJAMIN DC. ABALOS, JR.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Our Constitution declares that---the maintenance of peace and order, protection of life, liberty, and property, and the promotion of the general welfare are essential for the enjoyment by all the people of the blessings of democracy. In this principle lies one of the primary concerns of the State---road safety.

Vehicular or road accidents are so prevalent that even pedestrians awaiting for a ride or crossing the street have become hapless victims. Records show that hundreds of lives have been lost and thousands of people have been injured due to tragic vehicular and road accidents.

In a report by the UP Transport Training Center in 1993, the Philippines rank third on incidents of road accidents in the Asean Region at a rate of 12.9 persons killed per 10,000 vehicles; but the accident rate may be 75% more according to the Center. In their report, the National Road Safety Program for 1999-2000, a total of 10,824 people died and 108,030 were injured in traffic accidents from 1981 to 1990.

According to the Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA), in a span of three months, from August 17 to October 17, 2003, 134 accidents have been recorded as compared to 126 accidents for the same period in 2002.

It has been observed that many motorists are using their cellular phones or other similar telecommunication devices while operating their motor vehicles, which include those driving Public Utility Vehicles (PUVs). This practice of drivers of PUVs endanger the lives not only of the drivers concerned but moreover the lives of passengers which ranges from four to ninety persons and the lives of thousands of pedestrians.

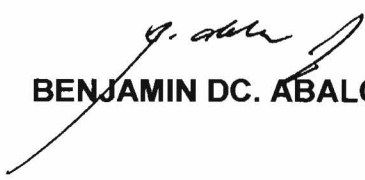
The use of cellular phone or other telecommunication devices while driving a motor vehicle divide and distract the attention of a motorist which should be focus on the road. Road focus while driving is a basic rule in the motorist handbook, commonly known as *passive driving*, which should not be violated nor negated.

Motorists must strictly observe basic traffic rules and regulations, and abide with road safety measures as a manifestation of their responsibility and commitment to public safety.

Moreover, Public Utility Vehicles (PUVs) are imbued with the highest degree of responsibility to the riding public and pedestrians on the road. PUVs as common carriers need to exercise extra diligence in the performance of its obligation to its passengers---to bring them safe and sound to their destination.

This proposed measure seeks to regulate the use of cellular phone and other similar telecommunication devices by drivers of PUVs, which includes public utility buses (PUBs), public utility jeepneys (PUJs) and taxi cabs and vans, by prohibiting its use while the vehicle is in motion.

In view of the urgent need for road safety measures, immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



BENJAMIN DC. ABALOS, JR.

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AN ACT
REGULATING THE USE OF CELLULAR PHONE AND OTHER SIMILAR
TELECOMMUNICATION DEVICES BY DRIVERS OF PUBLIC UTILITY
VEHICLES (PUVs) AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

Sec. 1. It shall be unlawful for any motorist operating a Public Utility Vehicle (PUVs), which includes public utility buses (PUBs) and public utility jeepneys (PUJs), to use a handheld cellular phone or any other similar telecommunication devices while his vehicle is in motion.

Sec. 2. Persons found violating the provisions of the preceding section shall suffer the penalty of one (1) month imprisonment or a fine of P1,000.00 or both upon the discretion of the court.

Sec. 3. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in two (2) national newspapers of general circulation. The publication shall not be later than seven (7) days after approval hereof.

Approved,