

Distracted driving debate with NSC:

I got into a debate with a director at National Safety Council (NSC) over the position of the NSC with regard to the use of mobile phones while driving. The view of the NSC is that the use of mobile phones while driving should be banned. They have amassed a good deal of research data to support their position. This data is impressive but badly flawed. My conclusion was that arguing the validity of the NSC data was a waste of time. The folks that are committed to banning the use of mobile phones while driving have got a rigid and fixed mindset and are not going to be swayed in the least by any information that refutes their argument. A more effective approach is to liken what they are trying to do as a re-run of Prohibition that occurred almost 100 years ago. Banning an activity that is highly popular with a large portion of the population will ultimately fail. Attempting to ban the use of mobile phones is a fool's errand and will never succeed. Todd Mozer of Sensory commented that banning cellphone use while driving would be like banning thinking while driving, since it is a cognitive distraction. Unfortunately, this activity is detracting from a more appropriate goal, which is to require the use of hands-free technology while using a mobile phone while driving.