

# Senate Advances Legislation Aiming To Curb Distracted Driving

Senate Advances Legislation Aiming To Curb Distracted Driving

Senate Advances Legislation Aiming To Curb Distracted Driving

In an effort to help keep Kentucky roads safe, the Senate passed legislation Tuesday that seeks to curb distracted driving by limiting the use of hand-held mobile devices behind the wheel.

Known as “Phone-Down Kentucky Act,” Senate Bill 28 would build on Kentucky’s ban on texting while driving, but includes some exceptions for navigation devices, certain types of radios and emergencies.

The bill’s sponsor, Sen. Jimmy Higdon, R-Lebanon, said the legislation would modernize Kentucky law to provide clarity for drivers and law enforcement personnel.

“This bill prohibits a motor vehicle operator from holding a mobile electronic device in their hand while operating a vehicle. This includes activities such as texting, typing, scrolling or watching video content,” he said.

At the same time, the bill was written with common sense and balance, Higdon said.

“It is to educate, change habits and save lives. This bill clearly allows for hand-free navigation and voice-based communication. It allows emergency calls and reporting accidents or hazards. It allows the use by first responders while performing their official duties. It allows use when a vehicle is lawfully parked or stopped,” he said.

The legislation does not prohibit, for example, a motorist to have a phone in hand when located at a stop light. It also does not apply to citizen band radios, amateur radios, ham radios or commercial two-way radios.

Higdon said the bill isn’t about punishing drivers; it’s about preventing crashes before they happen. Law enforcement personnel must have a clear visual confirmation of unlawful use of a device before initiating a stop, he said.

“They can’t seize, search, view or require forfeiture of your cell phone if you’re stopped for this offense,” Higdon said.

The bill also calls for the state transportation cabinet to post signage statewide so drivers will understand the law before it’s enforced.

If the legislation becomes law, Kentucky will join 33 other states with similar laws. It proposes a fine of \$100 for violations, but points would not be assigned to the driver’s record.

Higdon said the bill isn’t named after a victim of distracted driving, but he said Alyssa Burns lost her young daughter in 2022 after a serious vehicular crash and has been passionate about supporting the bill.

Sen. Brandon Smith, R-Hazard, said some of his constituents are asking if a motorist travels through an area that has surveillance, could driving while holding a cell phone be added as a secondary violation.

Higdon read from

the bill, which states a motorist can’t be stopped unless an officer has visually observed a violation with a clear and unobstructed view.

Smith expressed concern about what officers could potentially see through a digital format. He said there is a bit of vagueness in the legislation, but he voted for the bill.

Sen. Gex Williams, R-Verona, voted against the bill, saying collision avoidance and lane centering technology in autonomous vehicles or vehicles with driver’s assistance helps motorists be safe.

Senate Majority Whip Mike Wilson, R-Bowling Green,

said he voted yea because he’s been a motorcyclist since he was 14 years old and he’s aware of distracted driver dangers.

“Motorcycle license clubs have talked to me over and over again about the dangers of people being on their telephones, and we all see it all of the time. I’ve been trying to be hands-free,” he said.

Wilson said he agrees with motorcycle clubs and his friends who have asked for hands-free legislation for a “long time.”

“So, I’m happy to vote yea,” he said.

SB 28 advanced off the Senate floor following a 31-7 vote and now heads to the House.

## -COUNCIL

CONTINUED FROM PAGE EIGHT

School for the Deaf, and student members enrolled in career and technical education pathways.

Students selected for the council may serve consecutive one-year terms as long as they remain eligible to serve.

Interested students make a commitment to attend virtual and in-person meetings. Any member with two unexcused absences may be removed from the council.

A committee of KDE-appointed representatives will review and score all applications based on the answers provided.

Top-scoring applicants will be invited to interview for a position on the council. Appointments will be determined by how well the applicants communicate their ideas and goals.

The application deadline is 11:59 p.m. CT on Monday, April 6. Interested students should complete 2026-2027 KDE Commissioner’s Student Advisory Council Application.

Refer to the Commissioner’s Student Advisory Council application guide for required materials and additional details.



### ALLISON BALL AUDITOR OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Independent Auditor’s Report

The Honorable Scott Lindsey, Edmonson County Judge/Executive  
The Honorable James Vincent, Edmonson County Sheriff  
Members of the Edmonson County Fiscal Court

#### Report on the Audit of the Financial Statement Opinions

We have audited the accompanying Statement of Receipts, Disbursements, and Excess Fees - Regulatory Basis of the Sheriff of Edmonson County, Kentucky, for the year ended December 31, 2024, and the related notes to the financial statement.

##### Unmodified Opinion on Regulatory Basis of Accounting

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statement presents fairly, in all material respects, the receipts, disbursements, and excess fees of the Edmonson County Sheriff for the year ended December 31, 2024, in accordance with the basis of accounting practices prescribed or permitted by the Commonwealth of Kentucky to demonstrate compliance with the Commonwealth of Kentucky’s regulatory basis of accounting and budget laws as described in Note 1.

##### Adverse Opinion on U.S. Generally Accepted Accounting Principles

In our opinion, because of the significance of the matter discussed in the Basis for Adverse Opinion on U.S. Generally Accepted Accounting Principles section of our report, the financial statement does not present fairly, in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, the financial position of the Edmonson County Sheriff, as of December 31, 2024, or changes in financial position or cash flows thereof for the year then ended.

##### Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America (GAAS), the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards* (GAS), issued by the Comptroller General of the United States, and the *Audit Program for County Fee Officials* issued by the Auditor of Public Accounts, Commonwealth of Kentucky. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor’s Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statement section of our report. We are required to be independent of the Edmonson County Sheriff and to meet our other ethical responsibilities, in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements relating to our audit. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinions.

##### Basis for Adverse Opinion on U.S. Generally Accepted Accounting Principles

As described in Note 1 of the financial statement, the financial statement is prepared by the Edmonson County Sheriff on the basis of the accounting practices prescribed or permitted by the laws of Kentucky, to demonstrate compliance with the Commonwealth of Kentucky’s regulatory basis of accounting and budget laws, which is a basis of accounting other than accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America. The effects on the financial statement of the variances between the regulatory basis of accounting described in Note 1 and accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, although not reasonably determinable, are presumed to be material and pervasive.

##### Responsibilities of Management for the Financial Statement

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of this financial statement in accordance with accounting practices prescribed or permitted by the laws of Kentucky to demonstrate compliance with the Commonwealth of Kentucky’s regulatory basis of accounting and budget laws. Management is also responsible for the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of a financial statement that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is required to evaluate whether there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the Edmonson County Sheriff’s ability to continue as a going concern for twelve months beyond the financial statement date, including any currently known information that may raise substantial doubt shortly thereafter.

##### Auditor’s Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statement

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statement as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor’s report that includes our opinions. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not absolute assurance and, therefore, is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with GAAS and GAS will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal controls. Misstatements are considered material if there is a substantial likelihood that, individually or in the aggregate, they would influence the judgment made by a reasonable user based on the financial statement.

In performing an audit in accordance with GAAS and GAS, we:

- Exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.
- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statement, whether due to fraud or error, and design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks. Such procedures include examining, on a test basis, evidence regarding the amounts and disclosures in the financial statement.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Edmonson County Sheriff’s internal control. Accordingly, no such opinion is expressed.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluate the overall presentation of the financial statement.
- Conclude whether, in our judgment, there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the Edmonson County Sheriff’s ability to continue as a going concern for a reasonable period of time.

We are required to communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit, significant audit findings, and certain internal control-related matters that we have identified during the audit.

##### Other Reporting Required by Government Auditing Standards

In accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*, we have also issued our report dated September 26, 2025, on our consideration of the Edmonson County Sheriff’s internal control over financial reporting and on our tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, grant agreements, and other matters. The purpose of that report is solely to describe the scope of our testing of internal control over financial reporting and compliance and the results of that testing, and not to provide an opinion on the effectiveness of internal control over financial reporting or on compliance. That report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*, in considering the Edmonson County Sheriff’s internal control over financial reporting and compliance.

Based on the results of our audit, we have presented the accompanying Schedule of Findings and Responses, included herein, which discusses the following report finding:

2024-001 The Edmonson County Sheriff’s Office Does Not Have Adequate Segregation Of Duties Over Receipts And Reconciliations

Respectfully submitted,

*Allison Ball*

Allison Ball  
Auditor of Public Accounts  
Frankfort, KY

September 26, 2025

State law requires the Auditor of Public Accounts to annually audit fiscal courts, county clerks, and sheriffs; and print the results in a newspaper having general circulation in the county. The complete audit and any other audit of state agencies, fiscal courts, county clerks, sheriffs, and property valuation administrators may be viewed in the reports section of the Auditor of Public Accounts’ website at [auditor.ky.gov](http://auditor.ky.gov) or upon request by calling 1-800-247-9126.

209 ST. CLAIR STREET  
FRANKFORT, KY 40601-1817

TELEPHONE 502.564.5841  
FACSIMILE 502.564.2912  
AUDITOR.KY.GOV

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER M/F/D



LOOKING FOR  
SOMEONE TO HELP?

Try one of trusted local businesses  
in the Business & Service Directory  
below!

Would you like to advertise your  
business in the directory?

Call 270-597-3115

spots available for than \$50 a month!

TRUST WORTHY

HEATING COOLING

SERVICING ALL EQUIPMENT BRANDS!

FREE ESTIMATES • FINANCING

REPAIRS • REPLACEMENTS

NEW INSTALLS

270-246-3494

FULL CARRIER DEALER

Carrier

turn to the experts

Find Us On

Facebook

http://trustworthyhvac.com

Flame icons