

2-23-21

**House Government Operations Committee**

**Bill: HB 246, Ballot Measure Transparency Amendments**

Sponsor: Rep. Christiansen

Floor Sponsor:

**UASD Position: Tracking**

This Bill: requires the Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel to prepare an impartial statement of the effect of a ballot measure.

Discussion: The 3<sup>rd</sup> substitute was adopted, which requires a single statement on a ballot regarding where to find more information about initiative and referendums. The substitute bill deletes the board the original bill created and requires the Office of Legislative Research to write a 200-word statement on each initiative and referendum. An amendment was made on line 163 adding “if any” to the requirement to explain constitutional issues raised by the measure.

Yeas: 8

Nays: 0

N/V: 3

**Outcome: 3<sup>rd</sup> Substitute HB 246, as amended, passed out of committee with a favorable recommendation**

**Bill: HB 160, Distracted Driver Amendments**

Sponsor: Rep. Moss

Floor Sponsor: Sen. Ipson

**UASD Position: Support**

This Bill: amends provisions related to the use of a handheld wireless communication device while operating a motor vehicle.

Discussion: Representative Moss said this bill prohibits most cell phone use while operating a vehicle. If this bill passes, a driver may only manipulate a phone while driving with one swipe to a phone that is mounted. The exceptions are during a medical emergency or reporting criminal activity. The penalty is an infraction the first offense or a class B misdemeanor if the driver imposed physical harm to anyone due to the phone usage. A citizen named Leslie Rasmussen shared her story of the consequences of distracted driving and voiced strong support for this bill. Rep. Lyman asked, if Utah has reckless driving or negligent driving laws, why does Utah need this bill? The Utah Highway Patrol representative said distracted driving continues to be a serious problem. The Utah Highway patrol is currently finding it difficult to differentiate what someone is doing with their phone. The Utah Chiefs of Police Association, Unified Fire Authority, Bear River Insurance and the Utah Association of Justice voiced support for this bill. Members of the public voiced opposition to this bill. The Libertas Institute voiced opposition to this bill. Rep. Thurston requested a motion to return the bill back to the rules committee stating that the sponsor did not recognize his concerns or the concerns of the people who voiced opposition to the bill. Rep. Waldrip, Rep. Pierucci, and Rep. Dailey-Provost voiced opposition to this motion. Rep. Peterson voiced support for the motion. The motion passed 7 to 4 to return HB 160 to the rules committee.

Yeas: 7

Nays: 4

N/V: 0

**Outcome: HB 160 returned to the rules committee**