

# Texting Bill Changes, But No Agreement

In February, the House passed a texting bill, House File 2456, which barred all drivers from writing or sending a text while driving. The Senate then amended the bill, adding “reading” messages to the list of illegal activities regarding texting and driving. When the House took up the Senate amendment, the House made a radical change to the bill.

The texting bill, as passed by the House a second time, applies only to drivers under the age of 18. It states that these drivers cannot use any electronic communication device or any electronic entertainment device. This prohibition would not apply if the vehicle is at a complete stop off the traveled portion of the roadway, if the electronic equipment is permanently installed in the vehicle, or if the device is operated through permanently installed equipment.

This change was not accepted by the Senate. The next step in the process is for the House to decide whether to insist upon their version, or to recede and accept the Senate amendment, that simply added the word “reading” to the bill.

If the House insists upon their version, the bill will go to a conference committee. In the conference committee, members from both the House and the Senate will work to create a bill that a majority of both chambers can agree on.