Survey From AutoTrader.com Shows Major Inconsistency Between Distracted Driving Attitudes And Behaviors

Even though a significant number of people admit to driving while distracted, most of them support legislation to ban talking/texting/emailing while driving and feel uneasy when riding with a distracted driver.

ATLANTA, Sept. 19, 2012 /PRNewswire/ -- The dangers of distracted driving are well known in the U.S., but that hasn't stopped drivers from engaging in such behavior. A survey highlighted in the September edition of the AutoTrader.com Shopper Insights Report shows that most respondents support a legislative ban on distracted driving and even experience negative reactions when riding with a distracted driver. However, they are still engaging in those same dangerous behaviors when it is their turn behind the wheel.

According to the survey, 90 percent of respondents support a legislative ban on texting/emailing while driving, and 57 percent support a legislative ban on talking on a mobile device while driving. A majority of those same respondents also indicated that they have a negative reaction when riding with a driver who is engaging in distracted driving behavior: 86 percent reported feeling anxiety, concern or fear when riding with someone who was texting/emailing while driving, and 51 percent reported the same feelings when riding with someone who was talking on a hand-held device while driving.

Add in the fact that 63 percent of respondents feel that the increased usage of mobile devices has negatively impacted driving safety, and one would assume that those same people don't engage in such dangerous behaviors while driving. But that's not the case.

In the survey, 29 percent of those same respondents who said they feel anxiety when others engage in these activities admitted to writing or reading texts at least occasionally when actually driving, and 48 percent said that they make or accept calls at least occasionally while driving.

"To see the majority of drivers support a legislative ban on distracted driving—particularly texting while driving—while at least a third of them still engage in the behavior is mind boggling to say the least," said Rick Wainschel, vice president of automotive insights at AutoTrader.com. "Not only do they think it is dangerous—they think that it should be illegal and feel uneasy when another driver is doing it. Still, none of that is stopping the behavior."

While legislation likely won't immediately curb such behavior, it would continue to raise awareness of the inherent dangers, and sometimes deadly consequences, of distracted driving.

"This 'it's not me, it's you' mentality is as dangerous as the distracted driving itself, as it fuels the irrational thought that such behavior is only dangerous if someone else is doing it. Any way you look at it, if your mind is on your mobile device and not the road, you're putting lives at risk. It's as simple as that," Wainschel continued.

Click here to view the first September edition of the Shopper Insights Report from the AutoTrader.com Trend Engine.

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