Spring 2018 Helena District Writing Assessment – 9, 10, and 12

“Distracted Driving” Prompt

Sample Score Point 6

Radio blaring, phone buzzing, and that soda just won’t fit into the cup holder. BAM! Now police keep asking questions about what happened as your vehicle lies wrapped around a pole. Distracted driving has significantly increase with the growth of technology and now the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) along with many states are talking, and they believe that initiative needs to be taken, whether it is changing laws like in Washington, or treating distracted driving differently. Although it is difficult to determine if distracted driving caused an accident, laws need to be more severe and technology needs to be updated to prevent distracted driving.

It is undeniable that trying to determine if distracted driving caused an accident is a dunting task. Many Americans do not have dashboard cameras filming every drive they take just in case they are in an accident. In addition, people can lie about whether they were or were not distracted in an attempt to save their own skin or shift the blame onto the other driver. Sure, cell phones these days have time stamps on messages, which could help, but they could also be wrong. A driver could have sent a text a minute before the crash, but they could have been responsibly parked. Also, technology isn’t the sole perpetraitor when distracted diving is involved. Eating, drinking, and other distractions are there which have no time stamp.

Despite distracted driving being hard to determine in an accident, laws should be introduced that increase severity of the punishment. Many people everyday are killed by distracted drivers, and even moreso are injured. With so many lives at stake the consequences need to be raised. Speeding tickets may be relitively inexpensive, but DUIs are both more expensive and can cause licenses to be revoked, and jail time. Distracted driving should be punished just as severely as driving under the influence; because distracted driving takes just as much attention off the road, and kills a comparable number of people. If a police officer clearly sees a distracted driver they should be pulled over and given a ticket that is comparable to that of a DUI. If the same driver is convicted multiple times, or is severely distracted they should be arrested or fined a comparable amount and their license can be suspended. This would greatly decrease the amount of distracted driving because there would be real, severe consequences to distracted driving.

In addition, car companies should take initiative and implement technology in their vehicles to prevent distracted driving. One piece of technology is a sensor, located at the top seam of the windshield, that detects where the drivers eyes are. This may seem like far out technology but large scale mines use this technology to observe their hull-truck drivers to make sure they are not falling asleep or distracted. If the vehicle sensed that the driver was not attentive it could beep at the driver and make a time-stamp note. In addition, vehicles could implement a technology dead zone in the drivers seat. This would prevent phones from sending texts and calls, and could put the phone on “do not disturb” so it would not ring and vibrate. Some concerned individuals might feel that this idea is preventing parents from contacting their children, and pose the idea that emergency calls are sometimes necessary. These people are correct which is why the vehicle would still allow communication when the vehicle is in park and would also allow emergency calls to go through. Also, if the vehicle is modern enough, the on-board phone will still operate normally. With this technology only the driver’s seat would be affected, allowing passengers to communicate for the driver.

With these technological implementations and laws distracted driving will become a thing of the past. Accidents questioning the distraction of the driver are hard to determine, but the new technology could help that as well. No longer will cars be wrapped around poles and people be killed by distracted driving.

Annotation: This essay effectively addresses the issue in the prompt and critically engages multiple perspectives while supporting the claim made. Numerous specific examples are used to support the argument and to refute counter-claims, and organization is effective. There are some errors in mechanics, specifically with punctuation (commas) and spelling, but these do not distract from the essay's content.