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**Testimony on SB 459**  
**PROPONENT**  
Senate Transportation Committee

Wednesday, March 11, 2020

Chairman Petersen and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on SB 459, requiring drivers to exercise due care when operating a motor vehicle and restricting drivers from engaging in any actions that distract the driver from the safe operation of the vehicle.

When it comes to using mobile devices behind the wheel, we strongly believe consumers must always make safety their number one priority. Unfortunately, smartphone distracted driving is becoming a pervasive problem.

- Nearly 9-in-10 people admit to using their smartphone while driving.<sup>1</sup> And in 2018, an estimated 266,000 were injured in a motor vehicle crash involving distracted drivers.<sup>2</sup>
- Habitual behaviors play a strong role in distracted driving. More than a third of drivers call distracted driving a habit.<sup>1</sup>
- Nearly 1-in-4 people don't see distracted driving as a major problem.<sup>1</sup> And 52% of people are more likely to stop driving distracted if a friend or passenger pressures them to.<sup>1</sup>

While wireless devices are important safety tools, there are appropriate and inappropriate times to use them. Recognizing this, we support SB 459 as it could help discourage drivers from using handheld wireless devices in unsafe activities while behind the wheel. We believe this bill is a positive step toward this goal and over time will act as a deterrent that makes Kansas drivers think twice before picking up their smartphone to engage in distracting activities like video-chatting or snapping a picture while driving.

That being said, SB 459 recognizes that there will be times where use of wireless devices is needed while driving—particularly in emergency scenarios. As such, this bill provides an exemption for drivers who need to make emergency calls, summon medical help, or to report on-going illegal activity to law enforcement.

While public policy is an important tool in discouraging behavior, AT&T also recognizes that it will take collective action to combat this public safety issues. Recognizing the dangers of smartphone-related distracted driving, AT&T has invested considerable resources to educate our employees, customers and the general public about the responsible use of phones in cars. As part of our ongoing commitment to driver safety, AT&T launched *It Can Wait* a public awareness campaign dedicated to raising the awareness of all drivers about the risks of texting while driving. Our campaign evolved as smartphone driving distractions have grown beyond texting to social media, web surfing, selfies and video chatting. Today, the *It Can Wait* campaign shares a simple message: Please don't drive distracted.

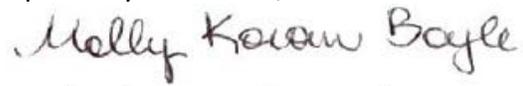
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<sup>1</sup> Online survey with 624 respondents conducted by Added Value. Ongoing survey, data represented here were collected July 2019-September 2019. National panel sample (ages 15-54, drive, and have a smartphone).sample (ages 15-54, drive, and have a smartphone).

<sup>2</sup> National Safety Council, Injury Facts, 2018

As technology and the way we interact with it changes, we are committed to working with local, state, and federal policymakers; the industry; and our customers to develop policy around limiting distracted driving and ensuring that all Kansans know that no text, glance, post, search or email is worth a life.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Molly Kocour Boyle". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the phrase "Respectfully submitted,".

Molly Kocour Boyle  
President – AT&T Kansas