

SB 76 & HB 107 - Distracted Driving Bills don't exempt Amateur Radio

NFL Section Manager's Message

March 7, 2019

Hello North Florida Hams! There is something brewing that everyone who operates a mobile 2-way radio should know... Text courtesy of Dave, N9HF. Edited for clarity.

“As you all may, or may not be aware of, the friendly folks in Tallahassee are in the process of making texting or doing other distracting things while driving a motor vehicle a stoppable (primary) offense. We have all heard the stories from other states about how operating ham (or other two-way mobile radios) got sucked into the fray and the hams had to go through major hassles to get us exempted from the legal definition.

If the wording stands as “other distractions” we will be at the mercy of every [Law Enforcement Officer's] interpretation of “distracting”.

Contact your representatives and ask that the wording of the bill be such as to expressly exempt AMATEUR RADIO!”

Republican Senator Wilton Simpson is the one who is pushing this bill. Simpson, who has been a member of the Florida Senate since 2012, represents the 10th District, which includes Citrus, Hernando and part of Pasco County. Previously, he represented the 18th District from 2012 to 2016.

I recommend everyone contact their representative and tell them that Amateur Radio and other two-way radios need to be exempted from this bill! You can find your Senate representative by going to <http://www.flsenate.gov/Senators/#Senators> and search for your county.

Florida House representatives Jackie Toledo and House Speaker Jose Oliva are promising that a similar House bill that hasn't been heard in committee yet, will get a hearing. I would also recommend you contact your House representative and tell them to make sure Amateur Radio and other two-way radios need to be exempted from this bill! You can find your House representative by going to <https://www.myfloridahouse.gov/Sections/Representatives/representatives.aspx> and search for your county.

The Senate bill is listed as CS/CS/SB 76 or S 76, sponsored by Senator Wilton Simpson. The House bill is listed as HB 107, sponsored by Jackie Toledo.

Please feel free to forward this!

Thank you!

73,

Kevin Bess - KK4BFN
ARRL North Florida Section Manager