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## DIGEST

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Badon

HB No. 695

**Abstract:** Defines and prohibits the use of wireless communication devices while driving for all La. state drivers.

Present law prohibits any person from operating a motor vehicle upon any public road or highway of this state while using a wireless telecommunications device to write, send, or read a text-based communication.

Present law also provides that for the purposes of present law, a person shall not be deemed to be writing, reading, or sending a text message if the person reads, selects, or enters a telephone number or name in a wireless telecommunications device for the purpose of making a telephone call.

Proposed law deletes present law.

Proposed law deletes the phrase and definition of "write, send, or read a text-based communication" and replaces it with the phrase "using a wireless telecommunications device" and defines it.

Proposed law defines "use" of a wireless telephone or electronic communication device to include but not be limited to talking or listening to another person on the telephone, text messaging, or sending an electronic message via the wireless telephone or electronic communication device.

Present law provides that, regardless of age, a person issued a driver's license for the first time shall be prohibited from using a cellular telephone for any purpose while operating a motor vehicle for a period of one year from the date of the issuance of the license. Present law provides for exceptions and penalties.

Proposed law repeals present law.

Present law prohibits the holder of a Class "E" learner's license or intermediate license from using a wireless telecommunications device while driving. Present law provides for exceptions and penalties.

Proposed law repeals present law.

Present law prohibits persons who are 17 years of age or younger from operating a motor vehicle while using any wireless communications device. Present law provides for exceptions and penalties.

Proposed law repeals present law.

Proposed law provides that any violation constitutes a primary offense.

(Amends R.S. 32:300.5(A)(1), (2)(b) and (C)(4) and 398.10(A)(6); Adds R.S. 32:300.5(B)(4) and (C)(5); Repeals R.S. 32:289.1, 300.6, and 300.7)

#### Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

Committee Amendments Proposed by House Committee on Transportation, Highways and Public Works to the original bill.

1. Allowed for the use of a cellular device while driving a motor vehicle only when the telephone is a hands-free wireless telephone or the electronic communication device is used hands free.
2. Allowed for the use of two-way mobile radio transmitters and devices in a motor vehicle by licensees of the Federal Communications Commission in the Amateur Radio Service.
3. Provided that the violation of texting while driving a motor vehicle shall constitute a moving violation.
4. Provided for the collection and reporting of statistical information relating to traffic stops.