

Teen texting while driving ban could be on the way

SPRINGFIELD, GA (WTOC) - It seems like everywhere you look, someone's texting behind the wheel and that includes teenagers. But Georgia lawmakers want to change that. They're talking about making a law banning teens from texting while driving.

Nate Hayes spends a lot of time at Effingham County High School teaching teens like Melaina Joyner and Brock Love what it takes to be a defensive driver.

He says the key to being a successful driver is to give 100 percent of their attention to the road.

So when he first heard about the new proposed law, he was all for it.

"Teenagers are very interested in their phones. They want to use the cell phones and because of the new Joshua Law, the students have to be experienced and for me, kids don't have experience so if they combine driving it causes problems," said Hayes.

The new law would ban teens under the age of 18 from talking on their phones and texting. The only exception would be for an emergency.

So what do teens think about this? Surprisingly they are on board.

"It's dangerous, bottom line it's dangerous. So, I think it's a great idea especially for teenagers because we are more focused on our cell phones then anything else,"said Melaina Joyner.

Joyner says she knows what it feels like to be in a car with a teen who's using a cell phone.

"I do have friends that do have their license and they talk on the phone and I do not feel safe,"said Joyner.

"I think it's important because we are less experienced," said Love.

As for Hayes, he says any law that keeps his students more focused on the road is a good thing.

"I think it's something that will save lives,"said Hayes.

If caught driving and using their cell phone, they could pay a hefty fine of \$175 for the first offense and \$500 for the second. If they cause an accident, their licenses could be suspended.

Lawmakers will talk about the proposed law during the legislative session beginning in January. The bill could expand to include all drivers.

If passed, Georgia would join 17 other states that already ban teens from using cell phones while driving.