



## Alaska State Legislature

Representative Berta Gardner

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE · January 8, 2009**

### ***GARDNER FILES BILL TO MAKE ROADWAYS SAFER***

Law will prohibit minors from using cell phones while driving

ANCHORAGE – Rep. Berta [Gardner](#) (D-Anchorage) has pre-filed a bill aimed at making Alaska roads safer. The bill would prohibit minors from using cellular telephones while driving.

“Cell phones and other electronic devices are huge distractions for drivers,” Gardner said. “When you’re operating three-thousand pounds of metal in traffic and through neighborhoods, it’s imperative to keep your mind on the road.” Gardner added that cell phones present an even greater hazard in the hands of minors who have even less driving experience than adults.

Between 2002 and 2006 there were 289 Alaskan traffic accidents known to involve cell phone use by drivers. The largest group, about 35 percent, involved drivers between 16 and 20 years old. In fact people between 16 and 24 are the most frequent cell phone users. Research shows that hands-free units do not reduce the danger because focusing on the conversation, rather than on the road, is the primary cause of cellular-related accidents.

“Cell phones are a great convenience and a necessary tool in our culture,” Gardner said. “But when convenience and efficiency collide with safety, that’s where I draw the line. This isn’t about inconveniencing some drivers; it’s about making all drivers safer.”

The first list of pre-filed bills is due out on Friday. The Twenty-Sixth Legislative session begins in Juneau on Jan. 20.

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