Taiwan Proposes Fining 'Distracted Walking' Due To 'Smart Phone Addiction'

from the this-will-surely-'work' dept

Back during the fervor over distracted driving discussions that generally looked to paint smart phones as a mythical human-murdering device that required new legislation in the realm of automobiles, one common refrain centered around the question of whether we’d take the next illogical step and ban walking while talking on phones or texting. Even Mike, our most esteemed leader, made such a quip: “will we now see legislation proposed to ban walking while yakking on your mobile phone as well?” Pssh, of course we will.

Or will soon, I should say, assuming “we” includes Taiwan, where a group of politicians are looking to levy fines against distracted walkers.

Looking to make crossing the street a little safer, Taiwanese legislators have proposed fining pedestrians who cross the street while "distracted" by mobile phones. The proposed law will fine any pedestrian deemed "distracted" about $10 for each infraction! According to Taiwanese media, there are over 14,000,000 mobile internet users in Taiwan, many of whom are supposedly "addicted" to their smartphones. This smartphone addiction has supposedly led to various traffic accidents on the island, so much so that 17 legislators have put forth a new law to fine distracted walkers.

There’s that addiction word, which has already gone such a long way towards removing any responsibility people have for their own actions in the past. Time for the government to step in and do a little social engineering through…$10 fines? That doesn’t seem like it will serve all that well as a deterrent. Hell, here in the States, we have people facing jail time and license revocation for drunken driving leave the courtroom and immediately get in their cars. What’s $10 going to do? And what examples do we have that such a fine is necessary to begin with?

Taiwan's Apple Daily gave an example of a young woman in Kaoshuing, Taiwan. In late March, this young woman was crossing the street and, while she was distracted by her phone, she was hit by an oncoming taxi cab. She later passed away in the hospital.

I don’t know, it seems to me that tossing a $10 fine into the woman’s grave with her isn’t so much passing effective legislation as it is pissing on someone’s casket. Add to that the reports that these politicians are supposedly looking to emulate several failed traffic laws here in the States and I wonder whether everyone might just need a good solid midday nap so we can all get back to being sane.

Oddly, the report’s own survey found that something like 80% of people responding to the poll are in favor of the fine. The report did not clarify whether respondents did so on smart phones while they were walking alongside a busy highway, but I like to think they were. Any chance we could just go with a little common sense education of the walking dead public, instead? Naaaaah.