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You have 50 minutes to read the article below and write a 300-word essay. Answer the question at the bottom of the page.

Distracted Walking

by Rick Grimes

The spread of smartphones has created a whole new set of human behavior, and some of those habits can cause serious trouble for other people. One such behavior is called “distracted walking.” Pedestrians, people who walk on the sidewalk next to the street, often ignore other pedestrians, cars, and traffic signals around them because they are looking at their phones. Distracted walking can result in minor accidents such as walking into objects or other people, but it can also lead to more serious injuries if a distracted pedestrian causes a car accident. The National Safety Council in the U.S. reports that distracted walkers were responsible for over 11,000 injuries between 2001 and 2011. Pamela Lampitt, a lawmaker in New Jersey, believes that this is a serious public safety issue and that the government must discourage distracted walking by making it illegal. Many cities and states have laws against distracted driving, and Lampitt argues that “an individual crossing the road distracted by their smartphone presents just as much danger” as a person who texts while driving. However, many people believe a law against distracted walking cannot be enforced. They believe that it is not possible for one police officer to stop every distracted walker on a busy street in a major city. Lucas Anton, a police officer in Seattle, argues that a law against distracted walkers will only lead to more distracted police. “Police officers already have a lot of work to do in crowded cities. They should focus their attention on stopping violent crime, not on punishing ordinary people who are just looking at their phones.” People may change their habits if they suffer more injuries and cause more accidents, but if the trend continues, more cities and states may try to change behavior with new laws against distracted walking.

Q: Should there be a law against looking at your phone while walking? You may use specific information from the article, general knowledge, and your personal experience to support your view.

Student Response to Sample Test 1

“Distracted walking” means looking at phones while walking on the street. Because the behavior is dangerous and may cause accident, there are debates on whether the government should prohibit it or not. Making a law restricting distracted walking does sound like a good idea, but I personally believe that it will not be effective at all.

According to the National Safety Council in the U.S., there were more than 11,000 injuries caused by the “distracted walkers” between 2001 and 2011. People who are driving or walking carefully suffer injuries because of distracted walkers. Pamela Lampitt, a lawyer in New Jersey, thinks that it should be made illegal by the government, since it is as dangerous as texting while driving.

On the other hand, many people think that it is not possible to enforce laws against distracted walking. This is due to the fact that there are just too many people in the major cities, and that the officers are too busy dealing with the more violent problems. Lucas Anton, a police officer in Seattle, states that enforcing the law against distracted walking will only result in more distracted police.

A law against distracted walking will not work. There are just too many people using phones on the road, and they have been doing it for a long time. There isn't enough police officers to deal with everyone, and it is very difficult to making something illegal which has been legal for such a long time. The other reason is that the phones are meant to be used wherever we are to help us communicate or to look for information. Streets are one of the places that we should do this. Not allowing this will greatly reduce the efficiency of the smartphones.

Therefore, making distracted walking seems impossible because of various situations. Instead, the government should look for other solutions to deal with the problem, such as educating the public about the dangers of distracted walking.

(325 words)