

EDITORIAL

## Urbana's thumb on cell study

The Urbana City Council's recent move to institute a fine for cell phone use during a car accident was progress for improving driver and pedestrian safety, but one provision just muddies it and throws doubt on the entire ordinance.

Earlier this year, we favored an outright ban on cell phone use while driving. There's ample scientific evidence that says using a cell phone contributes to distracted driving and increases the likelihood of an accident.

A \$750 fine is some discouragement. But in an accident that could result in thousands of dollars in damage, not to mention physical injuries or lives lost, it's a comparative drop in the bucket. The logic is that a ban would do more to discourage drivers than a fine after the fact.

But setting aside that argument for the moment — starting July 1, Urbana will start tracking the involvement of cell phones in accidents and the data will be presented to the Council next summer. Presumably, the proposal of modifying the fine or enacting an outright ban will be revisited.

But by putting the fine in place now and then doing a study, it's not possible to get an accurate picture of the problem. Undeniably, the results will be skewed. While the fine may discourage drivers from using their cell phones, it may impair the ability of city officials to responsibly assess whether a ban will be warranted next year.

In effect, it's putting a thumb on the scale before making a decision.

### Our Opinion

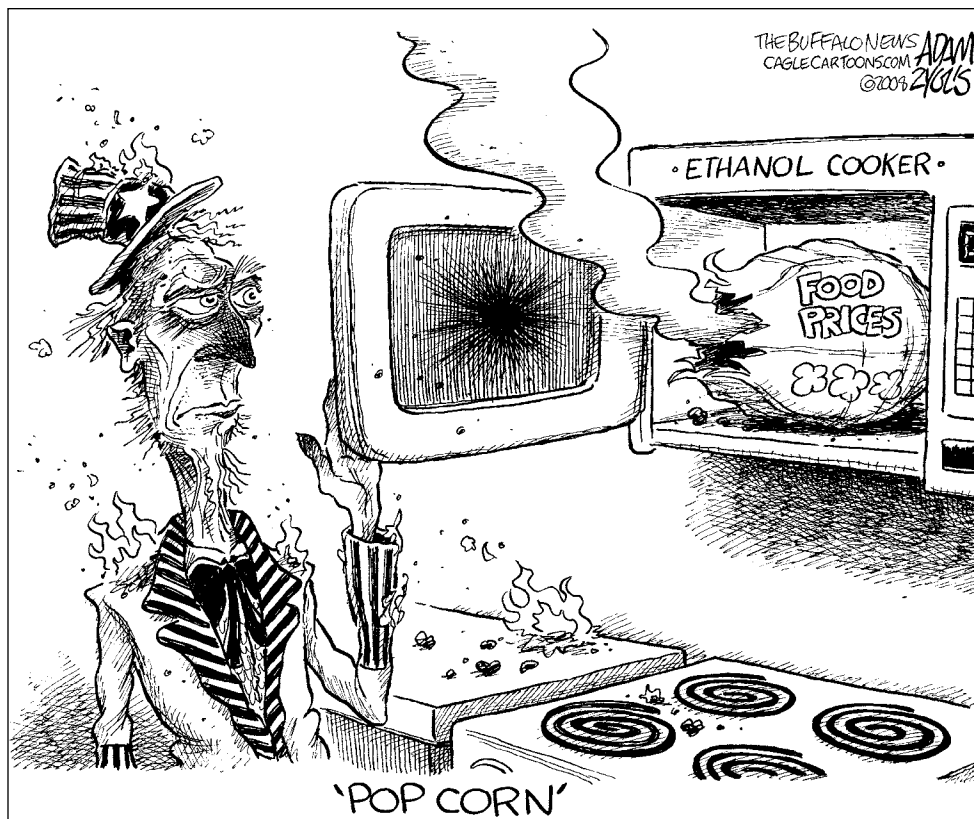
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Moreover, it would be easier to deem the fine as "enough" and throw out the idea of a ban altogether, even though it may do more to address the problem of distracted driving as it exists, pre-fine. Never mind how the study or fine would impact cyclists or pedestrians who may be distracted.

If Urbana wants to do its own study, the least city officials should ensure is fairness and accuracy.

EDITORIAL CARTOON

ADAM ZYGLIS, THE BUFFALO NEWS



## Beg for it, Hillary

If you really wanted to make Barack Obama the next President of the United States, you would go online right now and make a large contribution to Hillary Clinton's campaign.

I'm not certain why this helps Obama, but in a new video posted on HillaryClinton.com, the New York senator asks America to join her in supporting him. "I look forward to campaigning with him," she says, her face appearing next to a red button labeled "\$ CONTRIBUTION" that lets you help pay her campaign's \$22 million debt. I swear this is true.

This is a great idea, because people seem to really like Obama. It's the kind of outside-the-box thinking Clinton's campaign wasn't known for. Had she thought of this "Give-To-Me-For-Obama's-Benefit" strategy months ago, she might have raised enough money to win the nomination.

But there's always the risk that Obama supporters might do something silly, like give their money directly to Obama. If so, Clinton would still have her campaign's debt. The obvious way to handle it would be faking her own death, though this is not ideal if she wants to run in 2012.

Mike Huckabee, another loser of the primaries, recently signed with Fox News, a moneymaking scheme Clinton might want to consider. Aside from offering commentary on the election cycle, Huckabee is developing his own show for the network. Early speculation is that he'll play a kooky housewife always trying to con her husband, Ricky, into letting her perform at his nightclub.

But Huckabee is a former governor with no current elected office. Clinton is a sitting United States senator, and there's a real risk she could give a spontaneous, honest opin-



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ion from the heart that hadn't been extensively focus-tested. So if she decides TV is the answer, I say she go the American route and appear on a reality show.

They'd probably have to make a new program for her, since she doesn't fit the casting requirements of current network reality fare like CBS's "Amazing Race," ABC's "The Bachelor," or Fox's "Bikini Supermodel Wilderness Songwriting Life-or-Death Dance-Off." Lucky for Clinton, I have a TV show that would be perfect for her, and I don't ask much in return. Just a producer credit. And \$750,000 an episode.

The show is called "Beg For It." What happens is, a camera crew follows Hillary around the country as she pleads with regular citizens for cash contributions. A family in the Cleveland suburbs might have her mow its lawn for \$50; a cynical Chicago high schooler might donate \$15 for her to bark like a dog; her husband might offer \$40,000 to overlook recent infidelities.

Me, I'm easy to please. I'd just want Senator Clinton to make me laugh. All she'd have to do is explain how donating to her helps elect Barack Obama.

Scott is a third-year law student, and sending him money is a great way to get whomever you support elected President.

## Readers' opinions

The Daily Illini reserves the right to edit or reject any contributions. Summer letters must be limited to 200 words. Contributions must be typed and include the author's name, address and phone number.

University students must include their year in school and college.

Inquiries about possible guest columns should be submitted to opinions editor Andrew Mason via e-mail or by calling 217.337.8366.

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