

Approved 2-17-92
Date

MINUTES OF THE House COMMITTEE ON Transportation

The meeting was called to order by Representative Herman G. Dillon at
Chairperson

1:36 p.m. on February 11, 1992 in room 519-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Representative Rex Crowell - Excused Representative Delbert Gross - Excused
Representative Vernon Correll - Excused
Representative David Corbin - Excused

Committee staff present:

Hank Avila - Legislative Research
Tom Severn - Legislative Research
Bruce Kinzie - Revisor of Statutes
Jo Copeland - Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Arris Johnson, Hays, Kansas - Speaker of the Kansas Silver Haired
Legislature.
Bill Cutler - Kansas Department on Aging.

Chairman Dillon announced that the Committee would not conduct
hearings on House Bill 2823 today. He said that hearings would
be held Thursday, February 13, 1992.

Testimony - HCR 5041 - Supporting measures to improve the safety
of the highways through incentives for driver improvement courses
for older drivers and through more adequate highway safety measures
for state and county roads in Kansas.

Chairman Dillon called on Arris Johnson who testified in support
of HCR 5041. (Attachment 1)

Chairman Dillon called on Bill Cutler who also testified in support
of HCR 5041. (Attachment 2)

Discussion followed these testimonies.

Meeting adjourned at 1:46 P.M.

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I am Arris Johnson, Hays, Kansas, Speaker of the Kansas Silver Haired Legislature and speak in favor of HCR 5041.

The Silver Haired Legislature in its October 1991 Session passed a resolution asking for measures to improve the safety of highways. Through incentives for driver improvement courses for older drivers and through more adequate highway safety measures for state and county roads in Kansas.

We believe that HCR 5041 fulfills our desires and we support its passage.

Thank you,

Arris Johnson

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ATTACHMENT 1

Testimony by the Kansas Department on Aging
in support of
HCR 5041

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As a state, we have developed a system of transportation that depends overwhelmingly on the private automobile. Alternative forms of transportation are extremely limited, and while admirable in their intent and abilities to stretch scarce resources, meet only a fraction of the needs of the elderly.

The increasing deregulation of public carriers like Greyhound and Trailways has meant that fewer and fewer towns are served by buses. The decline of train travel is well known.

As a result, to take part in society as a full member requires the use of the private automobile to participate. Thus, it should be a primary goal of governments and society in general to take innovative and supportive steps to maintain the older driver on the road as long as possible, rather than focus on ways to take them from behind the wheel.

HCR 5041 contains the same language as a resolution passed in the Silver Haired Legislature last fall. At first, the Silver Haired Legislators were primarily concerned about better marking on Kansas roads, especially the solid white line on the right edge of the pavement. After committee discussion and hearings, they widened their scope to the two broad concerns of this resolution.

First, incentives for driver improvement courses. It is always hard to get someone to admit they need improvement in something they have been doing for years. If the person can say they are doing it to save money, this saves face and gets them into the classroom where learning can take place.

For example, although in one study the rate of accidents and convictions for drivers with loss of visual field (contraction of field of view) was twice as high as those with normal vision, almost half of the older drivers with reduced field were unaware of their impairment. A person's realization of their own limitations may make them change the way they drive, or encourage them to give up driving entirely. In addition, things like changes in traffic regulations and automobile design make driving very different from when we started. One innovative way to communicate all these things to older drivers is through driver improvement programs.

Secondly, the resolution addresses improvement of the visual information design. In plain english, making things on the roadway easier to see. For example, improving the readability of signs. The current guidelines for the lettering height on signs are based on standards set decades ago; they translate into requiring a visual acuity of 20/23. You can get a Kansas Driver's License with a visual acuity of 20/60. As you can see, there are many who have

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ATTACHMENT 2

KDOA Testimony, HCR 5041, cont.

trouble reading our road signs at the distance the planners think you can read them.

Making more designated left turn lanes is another. Older people have more trouble safely completing left hand turns than any other age group. This is due to the high number of independent variables which go into executing a left-hand turn, as well as perception problems in judging the distance of oncoming vehicles.

At the Kansas Department on Aging, we are working to find ways to help older Kansans stay in their homes as long as they can. Safe transportation is a component of making that possible. HCR 5041 addresses two ways to improve their safety on the roadway. We encourage you to consider its passage.