

## MINUTES OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND TOURISM

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Ben Vidricksen at 9:05 a.m. on January 22, 1998 in Room 254-E of the Capitol.

All members were present except: Senator Nick Jordan

Committee staff present: Hank Avila, Legislative Research Department  
Bruce Kinzie, Revisor of Statutes  
Marian Holeman, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: Sharon Huffman, KS Comm. On Disability Concerns  
Tom Slattery, Associated Gen'l. Contractors of KS, Inc.  
Gene Johnson, KS Community Alcohol Safety Action  
Margo Cioffi, Past Pres. Fla. Assn of DUI Programs  
Linda Stewart, Wy. Co. Regional Prevention Center  
Sibyl Turner, KS Mothers Against Drunk Driving  
Ron Eisenbarth, KS Alcoholism Counselors Assn.

Others attending: See attached list

Introduction of bills.

Sharon Huffman with the Kansas Commission on Disability Concerns in the Department of Human Resources, requested introduction of a bill relating to nondriver identification cards. Senator Salmans moved to introduce the bill. Senator Harrington seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Tom Slattery, Associated General Contractors of Kansas, Inc. Requested introduction of a bill concerning construction contracts. Senator Salmans moved to introduce the bill. Senator Harrington seconded the motion. Motion carried.

SB-167: An Act concerning drivers' licenses: Relating to requirements for licensure.

Gene Johnson, Legislative Liaison, Kansas Community Alcohol Safety Action, Project Coordinators Association appeared in support of SB-167 (Attachment 1). In response to member questions Mr. Johnson stressed the need for education prior to obtaining a first time Kansas driver's license; advised that cost of the training would be no more than \$35.00, and emphasized the need for statewide uniform training. Question was raised regarding possibility of "testing out." Members were advised this does not overlap the DARE programs nor is it the same as DUI offender programs.

Mr. Johnson introduced Peggy Cioffi, Administrator of Probation, DUI, and Florida's Drug Alcohol Traffic Education (DATE) Program for four counties in Florida. As a volunteer, she served the past four years as President of the Florida Association of DUI Programs and as Legislative Chair Person for that Association. His Association feels very strongly that this bill is extremely important. Therefore, they brought Ms. Cioffi in to provide information on procedures which have proven successful in Florida.

Ms. Cioffi presented background information, developmental, and operational details on their "win/win DATE (Drug Alcohol Traffic Education) program" in the State of Florida. Please note summary (Attachment 2).

Linda Stewart, Regional Prevention Center Directors' Association advised they supports this type driver's education program (Attachment 3). She pointed out the problems related to school based programs trying to accomplish this goal.

Sibyl Turner testified on behalf of Kansas Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), describing an accident wherein she was seriously injured by a drunker driver. She also talked about her experiences in school based driver's education (Attachment 4).

Ron Eisenbarth, Kansas Alcoholism and Drug Addiction Counselors Association, stated his organization

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND TOURISM, Room 254-E,  
Statehouse, at 9:05 a.m. on January 22, 1998.

considers SB-167 to be one of the most significant pieces of legislation KADACA has to date supported. He provided statistics and discussed the drop-outs who would not be "educated" through the school system (Attachment 5).

Chairman Vidricksen advised work on this bill will be continued as soon as it can be scheduled - hopefully next week. Senator Salmans expressed thanks to all those who appeared before the Committee in support of the bill.

Approval of minutes.

Senator Salmons moved to approve minutes of the January 13 and January 14, 1998 meetings. Senator Harrington seconded the motion. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 10:05 a.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for January 27, 1998.

SENATE TRANSPORTATION AND TOURISM  
COMMITTEE GUEST LIST

DATE: JANUARY 22, 1998

NAME	REPRESENTING
Eugene Johnson	K <sub>5</sub> D&RD
Jerry Coffey	State of Ia. - Drug Alcohol + Traffic Program
Ken Eisenbach	KADACA
Mary Moss	KADACA - OPACUT SERVICES
Sharon Huffman	KCDC
Jessie Alvarez	KCHA
Carla Byrne	
Bob Albrecht	KDOR
Alan Anderson	KDOR
John Smith	
Dennis Smith	KADACA
Carl Hill	KUCA
Carrie Reecht	Smoot
Gilda Stewart	Regional Passenger Centers
Don Cawkey	DOB
Pam McClees	Wichita Children's Home
Karen Lannon	AAA Kansas
John L. Turner	MADD Kansas

SENATE TRANSPORTATION AND TOURISM  
COMMITTEE GUEST LIST

DATE: JANUARY 22, 1998

NAME	REPRESENTING
Max Sutherland	Kansas MADD
Amy Lisanti	AP
Ed Neal	KADACA

## TESTIMONY

### SENATE TRANSPORTATION AND TOURISM COMMITTEE

January 21, 1998

### SENATE BILL 167

Good Morning Chairman Vidricksen and Members of the Committee.

It is a pleasure to appear before you this morning in support of Senate Bill 167. I represent the Kansas Community Alcohol Safety Action Project Coordinators Association. Our organizations provide the alcohol and drug evaluations and education for those persons convicted of or receiving diversion from an alcohol and/or drug violation, as required by law for the courts of Kansas. Since the inception of Alcohol Safety Action Projects by the Kansas Legislature in 1982, we have seen the D.U.I. fatalities in Kansas drop over 50%.

During the years since 1982, the legislature has given us more responsibilities in the area of alcohol and drug violations for those persons under the age of 21. In the past, we have been in the re-active position, we react after an offense has been committed. Senate Bill 167 demonstrates a pro active approach.

Our organization believes that the timing for this alcohol and drug education could not be better. The instructors of these classes will have the undivided attention of the applicant, as failure to satisfactorily complete this course will deny that first time applicant the privilege of operating a motor vehicle in the State of Kansas.

As of January 1, 1997 the State of Kansas has a zero tolerance law or .02% blood alcohol content level for those persons under the age of 21. A violation of this statute results in a suspension of driving privileges for thirty (30) days. We feel that it is imperative that our young citizen of Kansas be properly informed of our laws and the level of impairment even at the lower BAC level.

The Kansas Alcohol Safety Action Projects through their management information system found during the year, beginning October 1, 1995 through September 30, 1996 that approximately 3% of 2,834 court cases were from the ages of 14 through 17 years. These juveniles have been apprehended and convicted of some alcohol/drug offense such as a D.U.I. or transporting an open container. The same management information system also identified 11% of the 2,834 reported court cases were from the ages of 18 to 21. Collectively 14% of this sampling are under the age of 21. Obviously, there is a problem and we believe Senate Bill 167 will help reduce that problem.

We would make one suggestion, as far as the bill is presently written, in that the implementation date be changed to January 1, 1999, rather than July 1, 1997. This would allow our organizations more time to establish firm guidelines.

Our organization during the early part of the 1997 Legislative session had requested that your committee introduce this proposed legislation. Hearings were not held during the 1997 legislative session due to some difference of opinion throughout the alcohol and drug field on the implementation of this proposed legislation. Our organization still support the original language in Senate Bill 167 but will accept any changes this committee choose to make in order to move this particular measure through the legislative process.

*Sen. Transportation + Tourism Comm.  
1/22/98  
Attachment 1*

We ask your support on Senate Bill 167 as another measure to reduce alcohol and drug misuse and abuse for those who are applying for their first Kansas driver's license.

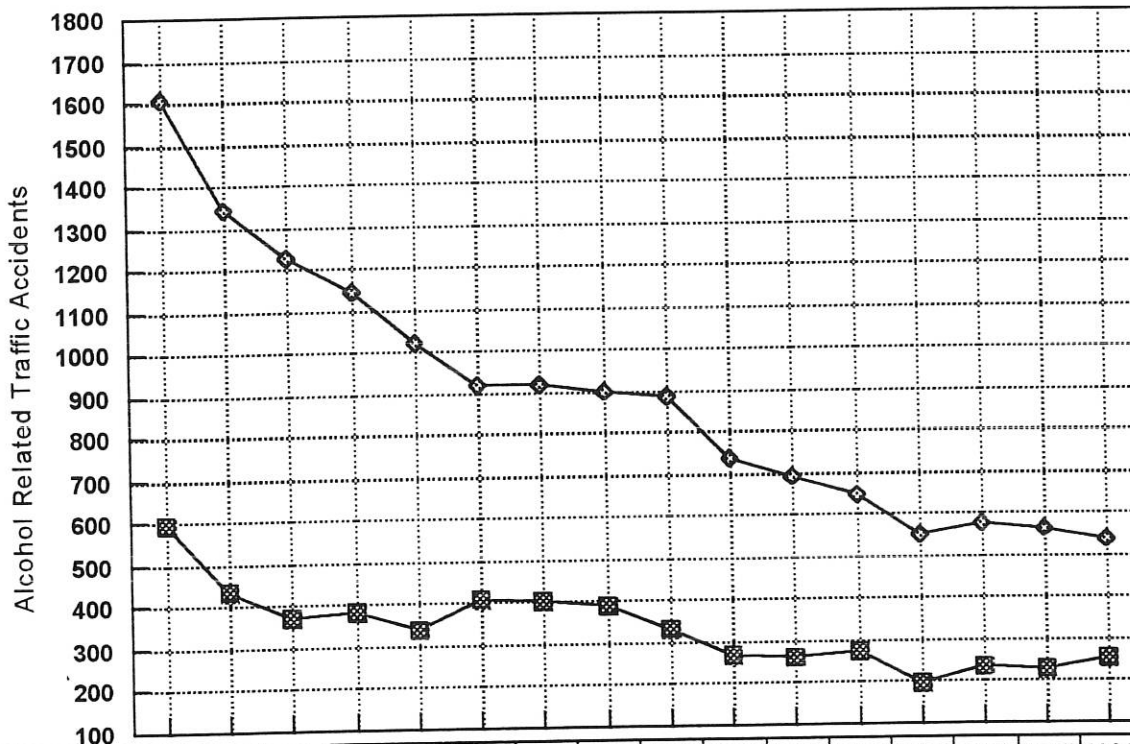
Thank you and I'll attempt to answer any questions.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gene Johnson".

Gene Johnson  
Legislative Liaison  
Kansas Community Alcohol Safety Action  
Project Coordinators Association

# Alcohol-Related Traffic Accidents by Driver's Age

Ages 15-17 & 18-20



	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
■ 15-17	596	434	367	382	335	407	401	392	328	269	260	270	193	232	227	256
◆ 18-20	1605	1341	1225	1144	1018	915	919	897	887	737	692	650	548	575	565	539

Source: Kansas Department of Transportation



**Testimony in Support of SB 167  
Presented to the Kansas Senate Committee on  
Transportation and Utilities  
January 22, 1998**

Distinguished members of the Committee and other members of the audience. Thank you for allowing me a few moments of your time to share some vitally important information regarding the effectiveness Florida's Drug Alcohol Traffic Education Program commonly referred to as the DATE Program.

My name is Peggy Cioffi. I served the past four years volunteering my time as President of the Florida Association of DUI Programs and as Legislative Chair Person for that Association. My "bread and butter" position is administering Probation, DUI and the DATE Program in four counties in Florida. I have been involved in the alcohol and drug field for twenty-two years. I have worked in school-based programs and have seen first hand what alcohol and other drugs are doing to the kids in this country.

I have provided you with very current statistics that show alcohol is the #1 killer of our teens today. You have statistical information in your hands that shows you that 64% of our teens use alcohol and drive after drinking or they ride with an impaired driver. We know that kids are impaired by blood alcohol levels much lower than adults. Most kids do not realize that.

You have a graph that illustrates that with education and early intervention, the carnage can be reduced. Florida's fatality rate in the 15-19 year old range has been reduced by 17% since the inception of the DATE program. I believe that the stats for 1996 are going to reflect a further reduction of 23% compared to pre-DATE stats on alcohol related fatalities and injuries.

*Senate Transportation + Tourism  
Committee  
1/22/98 - Attachment 2*



As a probation provider and DUI program, we have heard repeatedly and seen hundreds of written evaluations requesting the DUI information and substance abuse education be required of our teens PRIOR to getting their learners license.

In response to DUI offenders asking for this information prior to licensing and in an attempt to reduce the outrageous number of teen agers being injured or killed due to drinking/drugging and driving, Florida's legislature unanimously passed legislation that amended Florida's driver license statute in 1989. The requirement for all first time driver license applicants to take a four hour traffic law and substance abuse course became effective January 1, 1990.

Students were also required to show proof of acceptable attendance from their respective schools. The cost of the course ranges from \$23-30 and is offered by DUI programs and driver improvement programs. Classes are frequently offered right in the high schools through cooperative agreements with adult education, with DATE programs paying the high school staff to register the students and for utilization of their classrooms. This arrangement is a win-win for the schools, the students and the DATE programs.

From a financial perspective, *Florida's DATE program did not cost the State of Florida any money to start-up.* The Florida Association of DUI Programs developed the curriculum and trained instructors at no cost to Florida. The program is solely fee supported, requiring no funding from the State. Furthermore, a \$3 assessment fee is collected for every student who completes Florida's DATE program. Approximately \$600,000 is collected annually and remitted to Florida's Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles.

In sum, Senate Bill 167 provides the same opportunity for getting life-saving information to Kansas teens before they are injured, killed or jailed. **You have their attention. They WANT TO DRIVE.** Use this powerful carrot to provide them with traffic safety and substance abuse education. Your bill can be implemented providing a cost-effective, accessible life-saving program. We urge you to endorse this legislation.

I would also strong urge you to approve only one course. It's much easier to oversee and to do effectiveness studies that with multiple courses. Require satisfactory school attendance as part of the course enrollment and use the assessment fee concept to provide oversight and quality control. These considerations will make your programs more effective.

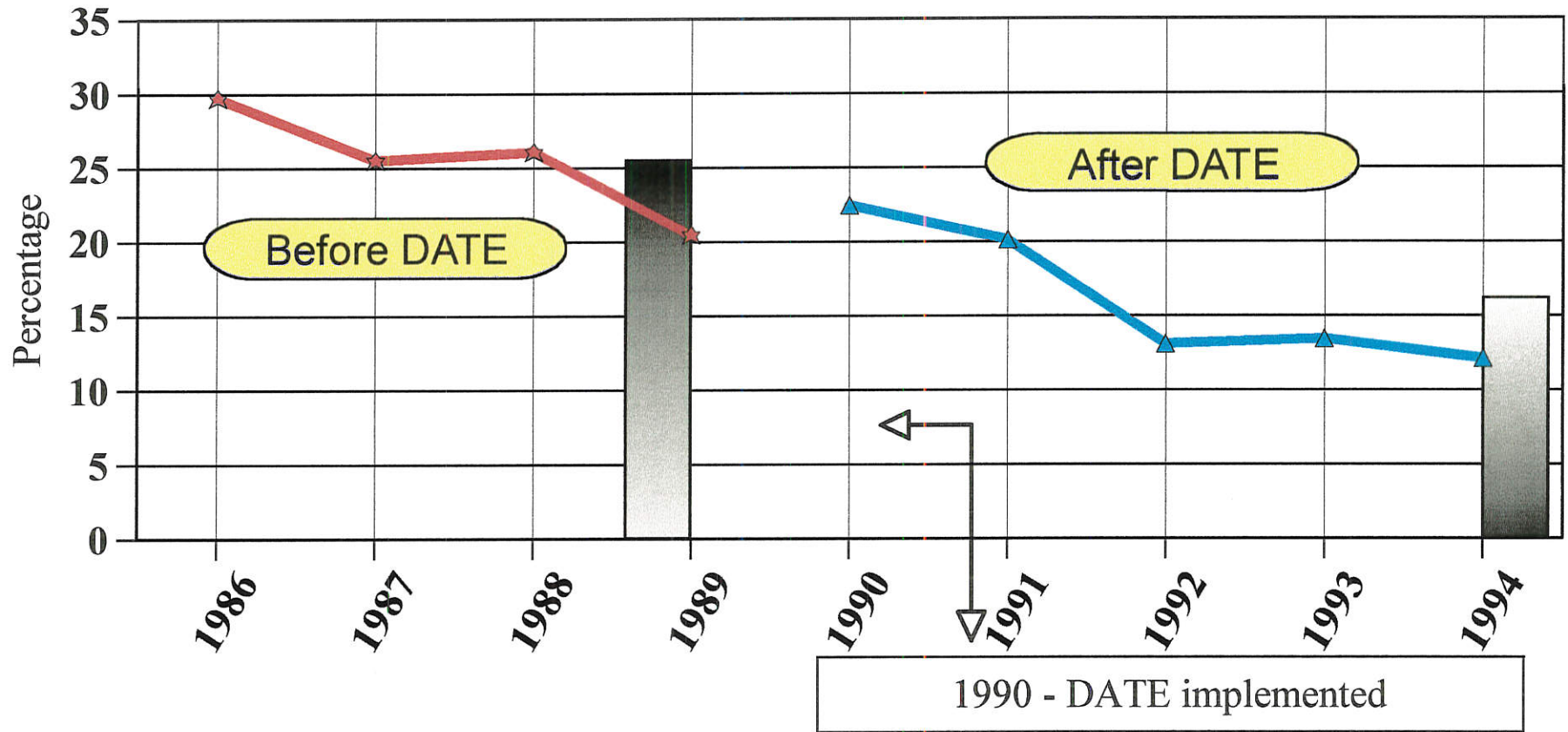
Thank you.

Ages 15 - 19

# % DRINKING DRIVERS IN FATAL CRASHES

2-4

★ Average before DATE ▲ Average after DATE



4-7



## LEGISLATIVE FACT SHEET

*in support of*  
**SENATE BILL 167**

**The development of effective drinking and driving prevention programs has been officially a NATIONAL HEALTH PRIORITY for several years (USDHHS, 1989, 1990).**

Provided below is compelling statistical data that further substantiates the critical need for effective drug/ alcohol and traffic safety education and prevention programs be required of all first time drivers license applicants prior to the issuance of a license follows:

**Did you know that.....**

- 1) ***Alcohol is the #1 killer of teen-agers today;***
- 2) Drinking and driving is a **significant cause of injury, disability and premature death** in this young age group (15-19 year olds) NHTSA, 1988);
- 3) **64%** of adolescents report recent **use of alcohol and concurrently driving** after drinking or riding with an impaired driver (Hain, Ryan, and Spita, 1989)
- 4) The **death rate** from drunk driving for high school age drivers (16-17) is **twice as high** as the death rate for drivers 25 and up.
- 5) Crashes involving 16-24 year olds represent **five times as many crash deaths** per license holder as drivers aged 35-64 (Williams and Karpf, 1992);
- 6) Teen drinking occurs mainly in **cars and on week-ends** (Gibbons, Wyle, Echterling and French, 1986; Gegrega and Klitzner);
- 7) Increased risk for serious auto crashes for teens begins at **very low blood alcohol levels** (CDC, 1991 & Howat, Sleet and Smith, 1991);
- 8) Female adolescents more frequently **ride in a vehicle with an impaired driving** (Sarvella, Pape). Odulan, and Bajracharya, 1990);
- 9) Of 4,390 high school seniors and drop outs, **80%** reported either getting drunk, binge drinking or **drinking and driving**. (NIAAA, July 1997).
- 10) In 1995, of **8,000 drivers** aged 15-20, involved in fatal crashes, **20% had been drinking** (NIAAA, 7/97).

Effective January 1, 1990 Florida Statute 322.095 was amended by **unanimous vote** of the Florida Legislature requiring first time applicants for drivers licenses to complete a four hour DATE course (drug alcohol traffic education). ***In 1986, 30%*** of alcohol-related traffic fatalities were in the 15-20 year old age group. ***After implementation of the DATE Course in 1990, teen traffic fatalities immediately began declining. By 1994, alcohol-related teen traffic fatalities were down by 17%.***

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**Question:** Why did the legislature pass this law mandating traffic safety and substance abuse education prior to the issuance of license?

**Answer:** Statistics in the 15-19 year old age groups indicated that this age group was overly represented in traffic crashes and fatalities involving alcohol. Additionally, **convicted DUI offenders** were requesting that DUI information and related material be required in high schools and as a requirement to getting a drivers license. A request that was hard to overlook.

The Legislative Fact sheet further highlights increased use of alcohol and drugs and related injury and deaths.

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**Question:** How was the four hour course implemented?

**Answer:** The DATE course was implemented by the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles designating that only Florida's certified DUI Programs could provide the course. DHSMV further designated the Florida Association of DUI Programs to develop the course curriculum, train instructors and work with the DATE Advisory Council in developing the DATE Administrative Rule

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**Question:** Is the course readily accessible to parents and students?

**Answer:** The DUI Programs are located in every judicial circuit in Florida and are licensed by DHSMV. Many programs offer registration and classroom sites in the high schools through a cooperative effort with adult education. Community colleges have also been utilized for course offering. The use of adult education in the high schools is a win-win for everyone. The DUI programs handle the administrative component (rosters, certificates, reporting to DHSMV, Annual Reports, etc); adult ed registers the students and receives a portion of the registration fee for this service, adding funds to their budget.

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**Question:** How much does the four hour DATE course cost?

**Answer:** Original cost for the four hour class was \$20. The DATE Administrative Rule requires that the registration fee bear a reasonable relationship to the cost of implementing the course. Fees today range from \$23-\$30. A **\$3 assessment fee** is paid to DHSMV for each student completing the course. This money previously was used for oversight and effectiveness studies. Approximately **\$600,000 is paid to the State of Florida** for oversight of the DATE system.

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**Question:** Who oversees quality assurance in the delivery of the course?

**Answer:** The Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles is responsible for oversight of the **course providers**; the course providers are responsible for oversight of individual programs offering their course. Originally, Florida had one **course provider, The Florida Association of DUI Programs**. Oversight was more controlled with one provider.

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**Question:** What problems has Florida had with the program?

**Answer:** There were no problems in implementation or provision of services until 1994 when other courses were approved. Regulation and quality assurance is more difficult with more than one course. Effectiveness studies since 1994 have been difficult because of multiple courses being taught.

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Regional Prevention Center Directors' Association Testimony in Support of  
Senate Bill 167

My name is Linda Stewart and I am here as a representative of the Regional Prevention Center Directors' Association. I am speaking this morning on behalf of Senate Bill 167.

The Regional Prevention Centers support the introduction of a driver's education program designed to reduce alcohol and drug related crashes. To be effective, prevention principles indicate that information must be age and developmentally appropriate.

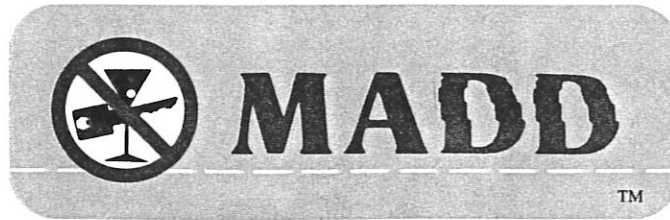
We believe that a driver's education curriculum would be effective because it would introduce specific information regarding impairment at the time when young people are eager to obtain a driver's license. The curriculum would emphasize the responsibilities attached to the privilege of driving and the consequences of impairment. We hope to increase the capacity for good decision-making by young drivers which builds on any alcohol and drug information which may have been received earlier.

We believe that a consistent curriculum should be utilized state-wide in order to maintain quality control. This curriculum would ensure that all new drivers receive information on alcohol and drug impairment, which is not currently available.

By reducing the number of drinking and drugging drivers, this bill could save lives. Nearly 8,000 individuals per year have been involved in alcohol related crashes in Kansas for the past five years. This includes not only the impaired driver and passengers, but those in vehicles struck by drunk drivers.

We are encourage by the 17% reduction in alcohol related crashes in Florida since the implementation of the program and hope that we can mirror those results in Kansas.

*Senate Transportation + Tourism  
Committee - 1/22/98  
Attachment 3*



Mothers Against Drunk Driving

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3601 SW 29th Street • Topeka, KS 66614 • (913) 271-7525 • 1 (800) 228-6233  
KANSAS STATE OFFICE

**Testimony submitted to Senate Transportation  
Committee in support of Senate Bill 167 January 22nd, 1998**

**Testifying on behalf of Kansas MADD  
Sybil Turner**

*Senate Transportation & Tourism  
Committee 1/22/98  
Attachment 4*



My name is Sybil Turner. I'm here today as a representative for Mothers Against Drunk Driving. I want to tell you my story of a crash that I was involved in and why I support Senate Bill No. 167.

In the summer of 1994 I had just graduated from Vo-Tec in the Warehousing Department. I was getting ready to attend Washburn University in the fall to finish up my Associates in Warehousing Management. I had also obtained a job in my field of study at O'Reilly Auto Parts. But on August 26th, 1994 everything in my life was changed. Just two weeks in to my new job and one week after starting my college career I was hit head on by a drunk driver.

That Friday evening I was on my way home from work at around 10 O'clock when I was hit. At that time I lived at home with my parents who live out by Lake Perry. I was driving on the bridge crossing the lake, on the other side of the bridge was a hill that the road went up and curved to the left. When I reached the other side of the bridge and began up the hill I saw the beams from head lights of a car getting ready to round the corner. Soon the car was around the corner and I noticed that his driver-side head light was on the yellow line and heading my way.

So I looked to my right to see if I could take the ditch, but there was a rock wall where the road had been cut out of the hill. So I got over as far as I could and turned to look back at him and hit my breaks. That is the last thing that I remember.

The next thing I remember was waking up in my car and not being able to identify where I was at, nor the time or the day. I later found out that he had crossed over into my lane and hit me head-on and then ran his car down the left side of my car. The force was so strong that it spun my car up the hill and into the ditch. His car went on and ran into the rock wall that had been to my right. Our cars were so far apart that when people began to help him they didn't even realize that I was at the top of the hill.

I suddenly realized as I began assessing the situation that it seemed to be taking them a long time to get me out of the car. The paramedics told me that I couldn't get out of the car because the metal of my car had been pushed in around my legs. They wanted to free me with the jaws of life, but it was dark they didn't have a very good light source and they didn't really know where my feet were at. After finding this out, I lost it and started yelling at them to "Get this car off me!". They explained that they were trying to and calmed me down. It took an hour and a half to get me out of my car.

I then had to be taken to the hospital to be examined. I was X-rayed and it was determined that I would need surgery that night; my left foot had been crushed in the car wreck. When I stepped on my brake and clutch pedals and then he hit me the force broke my arch, four toe bones, and two places in my ankle. The brake pedal then turned spraining by right foot and gouged my left ankle creating an open wound. I also received several broken ribs from the car door being pushed in on me as well as cuts, abrasions, and bruises over my body.

During my surgery I received two screws, four pins, and almost sixty staples for my foot and ankle and had stay in the hospital for a week. I found out while in the hospital that I may never walk again. The news was hard to take but with hard work and months of physical therapy I have been able to walk again. It took a year for me to get to the level at which I walk today. And in that year my mother had to care for me. Helping me take a bath, go to the restroom, dressing me, getting my food, and taking me to all the doctors appointments.

I have moved on in my life now but the wreck affects me every day. I did go back to Washburn University, but I had to find a new field of study. And when I went back to work I had to find a new job that required less standing and walking. I also live with pain in my foot and the knowledge that as I grow older and use my foot in everyday activities that it will deteriorate and I will eventually will need orthodic equipment to help me walk.

This is why I am here today to support Senate Bill No. 167. Drunk driving is a horrible crime that has results that can affect people for life. If we can start with students at a young age, especially when they are learning to drive, maybe it can be put in their mind set to not drive after they have been drinking. Or to not get into a car with a intoxicated driver who is behind the wheel.

My brother just took a Drivers Education course this summer. I asked him what the instructor did to inform the kids about drunken driving. He said that they had old books for the class and that there was a small chapter (compared to the other chapters) on intoxicated driving.

There were no hand outs given and he didn't remember if the instructor had any current statistics to share. He stated that there were two films that they watched.

The first film had a mother standing up in front of high school kids as she told them of how a drunk driver took the life of her son and mother-in-law and injured her daughter badly. He told me that everyone took the film seriously. The second film had what appeared to be actors drinking at a party and then driving away in a truck. The drivers friends were all in the back of a truck when a wreck occurred and all of the passengers died except for the driver. My brother said that his class mates were laughing at this film.

It is my hope that by having a certified instructor, who deals with the result and reality of drinking and driving everyday in their job will have current materials to interest the kids.

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 167  
PREPARED FOR PRESENTATION BEFORE THE KANSAS SENTATE COMMITTEE ON  
TRANSPORTATION AND UTILITIES *Tourism*  
JANUARY 22, 1998

Good morning.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of this committee for affording me the opportunity to provide testimony in support of what we in the alcohol and drug prevention and treatment field feel is very meaningful legislation—Senate Bill 167.

I am Ron Eisenbarth. I am appearing before you in my capacity as Chair of the Legislative Committee of the Kansas Alcoholism and Drug Addiction Counselors Association—KADACA. The Association represents the professional interests of approximately 500 alcohol/drug counselors who work in a variety of settings across Kansas. KADACA has over the years supported considerable legislation involving issues of alcohol and drugs. I believe that the bill before you represents one of the most significant pieces of legislation KADACA has to date supported.

First of all, we feel it is extremely important that SB 167 be viewed as a proactive step in the approach to reducing alcohol and drug use by youthful members of our state population. Its purpose is not punitive in nature, and thus should not be seen as threatening to those upon whom it will impact.

*The scope of this legislation is to reach out with meaningful information about alcohol and drug use to as many youthful Kansans as possible; to reach them in an environment in which they will be required to be attentive and in a manner in which they will be prompted to examine or re-examine the extent of their own knowledge of the use of alcohol and/or drugs. The goals of this legislation are two-fold: One, to achieve, as in Florida, a meaningful reduction of vehicular accidents in which youthful drivers are involved, and which were caused, at least partially, by the use of alcohol and/or drugs. Two, the reduction of the number of youthful Kansans whose lives are seriously and negatively impacted by alcohol and drug abuse. Examples: The school drop out;*

*Senate Transportation and  
Tourism Committee - 1/22/98  
Attachment 5*

*the D student who might be a B or A student; the accidental pregnancy; the commitment of a felony; gang involvement, and other socially unacceptable activities in which alcohol and drug abuse is the prime culprit.*

Senate Bill 167 is a very brief bill. But its reach is immense. According to figures provided by the Kansas Department of Revenue's Drivers License Examiners Bureau, there are one million, eight hundred fifteen thousand five hundred and seventy two (1,815,572) licensed drivers in Kansas—including those with commercial driver's licenses. Of that number, two hundred fifty-five thousand (255,000) are drivers fourteen through twenty years of age. The Drivers License Bureau does not break out its figures to show exactly how many youthful drivers apply for drivers licenses each year. Extrapolating from the statistics that do exist, however, it can be shown that between 30,000 and 33,000 16-year-olds annually apply for a regular, unrestricted driver's license in Kansas. *That is a number far too huge to ignore when thought of in terms of alcohol and drug awareness.*

We have long recognized the value and efficacy of driver training, teaching the skills needed to operate a motor vehicle safely and legally. It unfortunately has become the product of our times that we need to educate our youthful citizens about the serious and often life-long consequences of alcohol and drug use.

While statistics on the long term consequences of youthful alcohol and drug use and abuse may be more difficult to track, statistics involving teen alcohol and/or drug use while operating a vehicle are all too readily available. Figures supplied by the Bureau of Traffic Safety of the Kansas Department of Transportation show that in 1996 the fifteen- to twenty-year-old age group was involved in five hundred seventy eight crashes. Those were crashes in which the driver of at least one of the vehicles was a teenager and alcohol or drugs was involved. In those crashes five hundred and twenty seven persons suffered injuries. Twenty-one were killed.

Why is it necessary to provide alcohol and drug education separately, out of the existing educational system? It is a fact of life that all too many of our younger citizens leave the classroom

before graduation. They drop out. Figures from the Kansas Department of Education show in the 1995-96 school year nearly five percent of the one hundred twenty three thousand one hundred and twenty-eight (123,128) students between grades nine through twelve dropped out. The percentage drop out rate has been consistent within a few tenths of a percentage point for each of the past several years, according to the Department of Education statistics. That means that each year between five thousand and six thousand teenagers do not finish high school within their age group. It is likely among this group that the education regarding alcohol and other drugs is perhaps most critical.

I think we all agree that obtaining that first driver's license is somewhat of a rite of passage for most young people. Honor roll student or drop out, the driver's license is the most universally sought first privilege by teenagers. We should be certain Kansas teenagers all understand what impact the use of alcohol and drugs can have, not only on their privilege of driving but to the course their lives may follow. It is, we feel, a mandated responsibility we as adults all share and that Senate Bill 167 will help meet.