

MINUTES OF THE SENATE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Les Donovan at 8:30 A.M. on February 15, 2007 in Room 527-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Anthony Hensley- excused

Committee staff present:

Hank Avila, Kansas Legislative Research Department

Mike Corrigan, Revisors of Statutes

Maggie Breen, Committee Assistant

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Col. William Seck, Kansas Highway Patrol

Ashleigh Atkins, 17 year old Seat Belt Advocate

Jim Hanni, AAA

Dr. Howard Rodenberg, KDHE

Cindy D'Ercole, Kansas Action for Children

Dr. Robert Foss, Dir of Center for Young Drivers Highway Safety Center

Secretary Deb Miller, KDOT

Director Mike Watson, Kansas Association of Chiefs of Police

Others attending:

See attached list.

Chairman Donovan opened the hearing on **SB 211--Safety belts, primary enforcement for occupants under 18 years of age.**

Proponents:

Col. William Seck, Kansas Highway Patrol said, as the committee well knows, the current law requires the law enforcement officer to sight the driver for another infraction before they can ticket them for the secondary seat belt law. **SB 211** would also require all occupants between the ages of 14 to 18, regardless of where they're seated in the vehicle, to wear a seat belt. Law enforcement across the state supports the bill, thinking it a step in the right direction. They also support another bill in the committee, **SB 223** which would require everyone in the vehicle to be belted. Current seat belt usage in Kansas is about 73% and the national average is 81%. Most experts tell us that if Kansas were to enact a primary seat belt law there would be about a 10-15% increase in seat belt usage. The increased seat belt usage would have a direct effect correlation on reducing the number of fatalities. So far in 2007, there have been 41 fatalities and of the 18 reports received and reviewed 14 were not belted. It takes about 10 seconds to buckle up and it increases your likely hood of survival hood by about 45%. (Attachment 1)

Ashleigh Atkins, 17 year old Seat Belt Advocate and proponent of the bill, came to tell the story of her family's tragedy. "Cause of death was massive blunt trauma to the head and chest" they were told and the Highway Patrol had written "Most likely, injuries would have been minimal had Malorie been seat belted in." On October 2, 2004, Malorie was on her way home from a volleyball tournament, riding with one of her friend's parents. There were 3 kids in the vehicle. It was a nice fall day and an accident was the farthest thing from their minds. The four words "SHE DIDN'T MAKE IT" re-play over and over in Ashley's head every day. She knew something good needed to come out of this tragedy. Ever since she has been telling her story to many different schools and drivers' ed classes and promoting safety and the importance of wearing your seat belt. Ashley also distributes key chains with Malorie's picture and a message to "Buckle up for Mal". (Attachment 2)

Dr. Howard Rodenberg, KDHE, said unintentional injuries from motor vehicle accidents kill more Kansans age 34 and under than any other cause. It's a real public health problem. If there were an outbreak of a disease or an epidemic that killed as many people, we would be up in arms about it. Yet, we continue to let this situation sit and don't seem to be able to react it very well. Every year in Kansas we lose about 420-450 people and we see the rate continue to go up. It goes up with teen drivers as well specifically in the age group of 14 to 17. The net effect of the bill would be to save about 10 lives each year in this age group. His department also supports **SB 223**. (Attachment 3)

Cindy D'Ercole, Kansas Action for Children, said she is appearing in support of **SB 211** The committee has

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE Senate Transportation Committee at 8:30 A.M. on February 15, 2007 in Room 527-S of the Capitol.

heard all of the experts and they have her written testimony. She just summarized that as people work to protect their children and keep them safe, the biggest danger to Kansas teens is in our driveways. No matter where they are in the car, teens wear seat belts much less than adults. In 85% of teen fatalities, they were not wearing seat belts. Seat belts work and seat belt laws work. ([Attachment 4](#))

Pete Bodyk, KDOT - Written Only ([Attachment 5](#))

Dr. Dennis Cooley, American Academy of Pediatrics - Written Only (Addresses both [SB 211](#) & [SB 294](#) in his testimony) ([Attachment 6](#))

Chairman Donovan closed the hearing on [SB 211](#) and opened the hearing on [SB 294--Drivers' licenses, age requirements](#).

Proponents:

Jim Hanni, AAA, also representing the citizen's task force- Driving Force, spoke in support of the bill. The task force pledged to bring evidence based recommendation. At the top of the list of things this state needs to address to reduce car crashes, injuries, fatalities and the \$1.9 billion cost associated accidents, is fixing our system of licensing novice drivers. In 2005, there were 80 deaths, 7,000 injuries, and almost 18,000 accidents involving teen drivers. In well over half the deaths, it was someone other than the teen driver. These statistics can be greatly improved with minimal change, by implementing [SB 294](#). It's supported by over 30 organizations. Forty-five states have something similar. ([Attachment 7](#))

Dr. Robert Foss, Director of Center for Young Drivers Highway Safety Center, University of North Carolina, said his main reason for being here was to answer any questions the committee may have concerning the legislation. This really isn't about "teen drivers," it's about "beginning drivers." The problem is basically that for a beginner, driving is a terribly complex environment. Kansas statistics show that the rural environment is the one that experiences the highest number of fatal and injury crash rates. The graduated driver's license (GDL) has proven to work in this country and in the world. ([Attachment 8](#))

Secretary Deb Miller, KDOT, said they have been working very hard to lower fatalities. The task force, the Driving Force, was established and they were asked to look very specifically at lowering fatalities. It became apparent that there are a few laws that have a such a significant impact on roadway fatalities. The GDL is one of them. It is the key to decrease teen fatalities. There will be an 18 month delay should the legislation be enacted. ([Attachment 9](#))

Director Mike Watson, Director of Riley County Police Department and President of the Kansas Association of Chiefs of Police, said he was present representing both organizations to support [SB 294](#). Too often, law enforcement agencies respond to injury and fatality crashes involving teens. There is no duty they hate more than contacting parents to tell them that their novice drivers, or a passengers in their car, has been killed or seriously injured. It's equally as tough to go to someone's house to tell them their loved one was injured or killed in a traffic accident that involved a novice driver. He related a personal story involving a brother who was in an extremely bad accident. The brother, who was wearing a seat belt, was the only person in either car that survived the wreck. Mike said he always wears his a seat belt. ([Attachment 10](#))

Dr. Howard Rodenberg, KDHE , said he couldn't articulate any better than Dr. Foss and some of the other experts. His department is in support of the bill as a public health measure. Lack of time on the road correlates to increased crash rates. The net cost of the crashes the teens are involved in is about \$650 million. ([Attachment 11](#))

Col. William Seck, Kansas Highway Patrol - Written Only ([Attachment 12](#))

Steve Blackiston, National Transportation Safety Board - Written Only ([Attachment 13](#))

Jan Stegelman, Coordinator, Safe Kids Kansas - Written Only ([Attachment 14](#))

Terry Holdren, Kansas Farm Bureau - Written Only ([Attachment 15](#))

Chairman Donovan closed the hearing on [SB 294](#).

The meeting was adjourned at 9:31 a.m. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 20th.

**SENATE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
GUEST LIST**

DATE: February 15, 2007

NAME	REPRESENTING
Jim Harri	AAA
Robert Foss	Univ. of North Carolina
Deb Miller	KDOT
Mike Watson	Kansas Assoc. Chiefs of Police
Mike Bowen	FHWA
David LaRoche	FHWA
Bob Alva	FHWA
Darlene Whitlock	Driving Force KSNA & KEWA
Jennifer Hermann	KDOR
Bill Seak	KHP
LORI Haskett	KDHE
Natalie Adkins	
Archie Adkins	SB 211
Sammy Adkins	
Clint McVey	
Ken Gudenkunt	KDOT



K A N S A S

WILLIAM R. SECK, SUPERINTENDENT

KANSAS HIGHWAY PATROL

KATHLEEN SEBELIUS, GOVERNOR

**Testimony on SB 211
to
Senate Transportation Committee**

**Presented by
Colonel William Seck
Superintendent, Kansas Highway Patrol**

February 15, 2007

Good morning, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. My name is Colonel William Seck, and on behalf of the Kansas Highway Patrol, it is a pleasure to appear before you today to comment on Senate Bill 211.

Currently under Kansas law, law enforcement officers must cite a driver for another infraction before issuing a citation for failure to wear a seat belt. In some cases, a driver would receive a warning for the initial violation, such as speeding or an improper lane change. This makes it impossible to issue a citation for a seat belt violation when warning someone for the primary violation. Without a doubt, I believe issuing citations for seat belt violations is one of the most effective ways to bring about positive change.

Senate Bill 211 would require passenger car occupants between the ages of 14 and 18 to buckle up, regardless of where they are seated in the vehicle. The Patrol supports this legislation because our goal is to get everyone buckled up in the vehicle, and if people get in the habit of buckling up as a teenager, that habit will carry over into their adulthood. And while SB 211 is a step in the right direction, the Patrol and the *Driving Force* task force fully support another bill before your committee, SB 223, which offers protection to all occupants, regardless of age. Senate Bill 223 also includes funding mechanisms that will enhance EMS and trauma care in Kansas, as well as increase the fine for not buckling up. Studies have shown that higher fines result in higher compliance. Senate Bill 211 does not modify the existing \$10 fine for violating the seat belt law.

Since joining the Highway Patrol in 2003, I have strongly encouraged troopers to issue citations, rather than warnings, for seat belt infractions. In that time, our agency's warnings have decreased, citations have increased and fatalities in Kansas were reduced (down 178 deaths compared to the prior 4 year period). I am optimistic that the enforcement and education efforts of the Patrol and other Kansas law enforcement agencies contributed to these wonderful accomplishments. If we can achieve fewer lives lost by strongly enforcing a secondary law, just think of what we could accomplish with a primary law. Seat belt use in Kansas has increased every year since 2001. At 73% in 2006,

Kansas is still woefully below the national average of 81%, but the gradual increase over time gives me hope that Kansans are embracing the idea of buckling up.

The Patrol believes enforcement and education go hand-in-hand. In addition to troopers who give safety presentations at schools and community organizations, our agency is fortunate to have seven seat belt convincers and seven rollover demonstrators. The convincers, purchased with grants from KDOT, simulate a head-on crash at 5 mph. Riders, who are belted in, experience how strong a crash at slow speeds can propel them forward, but the seat belt protects them. The rollover demonstrator also purchased with KDOT grants, places a dummy inside the cab of a truck without a seat belt and simulates a rollover crash. It's frightening to see how easily the unbelted dummy is ejected through the truck's window.

Seat belts protect you from being ejected from the vehicle, being slammed around inside the vehicle, and/or making contact with the windshield, dash or other interior parts. Air bags alone are not enough. In addition, air bags are designed to work in tandem with your seat belt, and will not stop you from being ejected from the vehicle. A seat belt will. The force in a rollover crash is very strong and can throw people of any size out of a window or a door that opens during the crash.

Seventy percent of persons killed in 2005 were not belted. It takes 10 seconds or less to buckle your seat belt, which could make the difference of a lifetime. If you ever have the chance to put forth a change that will undoubtedly save someone's life – this is it. It is proven time and time again – seat belts save lives. Even with the best safety presentations, the seat belt convincers, and the rollover demonstrator, we need strong laws to support these safety initiatives. Statistics show states that have made the commitment and changed their secondary law to a primary law have experienced an increase in seat belt usage from 10% to 15%. As Kansans, we could quickly see as much as 83% to 88% of us buckling up for this simple change. As law enforcement officers, we are committed to protecting the public and saving lives. As lawmakers, this is your opportunity to join us in that effort.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak with you today. The Highway Patrol supports Senate Bill 211, however we ask that you also consider Senate Bill 223, which requires everyone to buckle up, as well as provides funding for improving EMS and trauma care. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

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February 15, 2007

**Testimony Presented to the
Senate Transportation Committee
SB 211**

My name is Ashleigh Adkins, I'm 17 years old, and a Senior at Wathena High School. I am a proponent of Senate Bill 211.

I am not going to get into statistics because you will hear that from others who speak. I would like to tell you why I am a proponent for the Primary Seat Belt Law for those 18 years of age and under.

Cause of death, massive blunt trauma to the head and chest. This is a direct quote from my sister's accident report. At the end of the report, the Highway Patrol had written, "Most likely, injuries would have been minimal had Malorie been seatbelted in."

For a minute, I would like to take you back to the day the accident happened. October 2, 2004, Malorie had just finished playing her last volleyball game of the season and was riding home with 3 of her friends. It was a beautiful fall day....a car accident was the farthest thing from their minds. Imagine the principal knocking on your door telling you that there had been a bad accident.

The four words, "SHE DIDN'T MAKE IT", do and will forever re-play over and over again in my head everyday.

Instead of talking to Malorie about her first day of basketball practice, I was picking out her casket and songs to be sung at her funeral. Instead of buying Mal a Christmas Present, I was decorating a tree for her at the cemetery. Just imagine looking across the table where your sister sat for every meal and know that she will never sit there again. You go to a basketball game and notice 1 player is missing. Each year I spend without my sister, I realize the things I will never get to do with her. Malorie and I couldn't wait for her to get into high school so we could play on the same basketball team together. Before every game when I step out onto the floor, I have to relive the pain of losing my sister.

Time has now taken on a new meaning for me. I have tried to become a better person, and not bitter. I don't want another family to have to suffer like ours. It's been 27 months since we lost Malorie and our lives were forever changed. 27 months since we heard Mal's loud laugh, saw her roll those big brown eyes, or even argued with her. While Malorie was here with us, she definitely made sure her life had meaning, that's why I want to make sure something good comes from this tragedy.

In October of 2004, if Kansas had had the primary seatbelt law for 18 and under, maybe the adult driving at the time would have made sure each passenger was buckled in.

I will not attempt to further describe the all too common horror Mal's Family and Friends have gone thru. I will ask you, instead, to focus on the chilling statistics you will hear today. **Crashes kill more children in Kansas than any other thing.** I know some will argue that the legislation is an attempt to take away their right to make choices. **I will remind you that no parent, grandparent, or other adult has the right to endanger a child.**

In closing, 27 months later, we still don't have any answers. One thing we do have is hope. Hope that adults will remember to insist on buckling up their children. Hope that people will remember how fragile life is.

Thank you to the Senate Transportation Committee for letting me talk today. I applaud the work your committee is doing to make Kansas Children Safe. Remember as you debate the critically needed legislative change, behind every statistic, is a family, friend, and community that will grieve forever.

This is the reason I would like for you to support this bill, if it is a law for children 18 and under to be seat belted in, then maybe somewhere, someone will not die, because they remembered to **Buckle-Up-For-Mal.**

Ashleigh Adkins



*Kathleen Sebelius, Governor
Roderick L. Bremby, Secretary*

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
AND ENVIRONMENT

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Division of Health

Testimony on SB211

To

House Committee on Transportation

**By Howard Rodenberg, MD, MPH
Director, Division of Health**

Kansas Department of Health and Environment

Chairman Donovan and members of the Committee on Transportation, my name is Howard Rodenberg and I am the director of the Division of Health at the Kansas Department of Health and Environment. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today in support of Senate Bill 211, which proposes to strengthen the seatbelt law for teenagers ages 14 through 17.

Unintentional injuries kill more young Kansans than any other cause, and motor vehicle crashes result in nearly half of these deaths. Thirty Kansas kids died and 2,613 more were injured as a result of car crashes in our state in 2005 (KDOT). Between 1995 and 2004, almost 31,000 people died in crashes involving 15- to 17-year-old drivers. Sixty four percent of the people who died as a result of crashes involving teen drivers were either passengers, occupants of other vehicles or pedestrians.

While teen drivers ages 15 – 18 account for only 6.7% of all Kansas registered drivers, they represent 20.1% of all crashes.

Crashes due to teen drivers cost the country an estimated \$40 billion annually. According to KDOT, in 2005, 16,156 crashes involving drivers ages 14 – 19 cost the state \$629,144,050.

Passage of SB211 would result in progress toward meeting Healthy People 2010 goals to increase seat belt usage and to reduce death rates due to motor vehicle crashes. Primary safety belt laws have been shown to increase observed safety belt use by 12% to 22.6% over secondary laws.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide this information to the committee. I will be happy to answer any questions you might have.

February 15, 2007



Making a difference for Kansas children.

To: Senate Transportation Committee
From: Cindy D'Ercole
Re: Senate Bill 211

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Celebrating 25 years
of child advocacy

Kansas Action for Children supports the enactment of SB 211. Traffic crashes are the number one cause of death for teens and one of the key factors is unbuckled seat belts. Increasing seat belt use is the single most effective and immediate way to save lives and reduce the number of injuries on Kansas roadways.

Teens are at risk: more accidents and lower seat belt use

Teenagers tend to have more accidents because inexperience, immaturity and risk-taking behavior make for a bad combination. Further compounding matters is that teens often drive at night with other teens in the car. Teen drivers are only 6.7 percent of all licensed drivers in Kansas, but they have 20.1 percent of the crashes.

The disproportionate teen driver accident rate is pored with a disproportionately lower seat-belt usage rate. Whether they are driving or not, teens are much less likely to wear belts than adults. In 85 percent of all teen traffic fatalities in Kansas the victim was not wearing a seat belt.

Quite simply teens are the most likely to be involved in a crash and the least likely to be wearing a seat belt.

Seat belts work

The single greatest defense against highway injuries and fatalities is the seat belt. When used properly, seat belts reduce the risk of fatal injury to front seat vehicle occupants by 45 percent.

Seat belt laws work

Research shows that standard, or primary, seat belt laws are much more effective in increasing safety belt use. In fact, the states that currently have the highest teenage seat belt use have strong standard seat belt laws. Teens are more likely to buckle up because people are more likely to buckle up when there is the perceived risk of receiving citation.

Many teens also support standard enforcement safety belt laws. In 2000, a nationwide survey was conducted to determine attitudes regarding standard enforcement safety belt laws. Of the more than young people 16 to 20 years of age who were surveyed, 60 percent voiced their support for standard enforcement laws.

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The Details:

There are two types of safety belt laws: primary and secondary.

A primary (standard) safety belt law allows law enforcement officers to stop a vehicle and issue a citation when the officer simply observes an unbelted driver or passenger.

A secondary safety belt law means that a citation for not wearing a safety belt can only be written after the officer stops the vehicle or cites the offender for another infraction.

In Kansas, children 14 and older are only required to wear seatbelts if they are riding in the front seat. The enforcement is secondary, meaning the driver must be stopped and ticketed for another violation. **There is no law, primary or secondary, that applies to teens in the back seat.**

Kansas Action for Children urges you to support SB 211 to ensure that all children under 18 are wearing their seat belt. It is more than just a saying: seat belts really do save lives.

Teen Seat Belts

A Single Step to Saving Lives

The Tragic Problem: Motor vehicle crashes are leading cause of death among teenagers. In Kansas in 2004, 51 drivers ages 15-18 were killed in accidents and almost 6,000 were injured.

The Simple Solution: Increasing seat belt use is the single most effective and immediate way to save lives and reduce the number of injuries on Kansas roadways. Kansas needs to extend primary enforcement of seat belt usage to include children ages 14 - 18.

Improving the Kansas Law

In Kansas, children 14 and older are only required to wear seatbelts if they are riding in the front seat. The enforcement is secondary, meaning the driver must be stopped and ticketed for a separate violation. There is no law, primary or secondary, that applies to teens in the back seat.

Primary Prevention

- In 85% of teen fatalities in Kansas, the victim was not wearing a seat belt.
- Failure to use seat belts contributes to more fatalities and injuries than any other single traffic-related behavior.
- Research shows that primary safety belt laws are much more effective in increasing safety belt use: states that currently have the highest teenage safety belt use have strong primary safety belt laws.

In Kansas, teens have the highest fatality rate in motor vehicle crashes and the lowest safety belt use rate. It is not just a saying, safety belts do save lives. It is clear that too many young lives in Kansas are being lost each year, and there is a clear and simple solution. All children under 18 should be required to wear seat belts in Kansas.

Fast Facts

Two out of five deaths among U.S. teens are the result of a motor vehicle crash (CDC 2004).

Compared with other age groups, teens have the lowest rate of seat belt use. In 2003, 18% of high school students reported they rarely or never wear seat belts when riding with someone else (CDC 2004b).

More than 90 percent of all transportation-related deaths each year result from highway crashes. Data indicates that nearly half of crashes involving children occur within 7 minutes from home (NTSB).

The Human Collision

At the moment of impact, unbelted occupants are still traveling at the vehicle's original speed. Just after the vehicle comes to a complete stop, these unbelted occupants will slam into the steering wheel, the windshield, or some other part of the vehicle interior. This is the human collision.

The human collision also includes person-to-person impact. Many serious injuries are caused by unbelted occupants colliding with each other. People in the front seat are often struck by unbelted rear-seat passengers who have become high-speed projectiles.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE
SENATE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE**

**REGARDING SENATE BILL 211
Primary Seat Belt Law Up to 18 years of age**

February 15, 2007

Mr. Chairman and Committee Members:

The Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) is providing written testimony in support of Senate Bill 211, a primary seat belt law for Kansans up to 18 years of age.

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death and serious injury for teenagers in the United States. In 2005, Kansas drivers 14 through 17 years old were involved in more than 9,000 crashes on Kansas roadways. According to research data provided by the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA), safety belt use is the single most effective countermeasure available to passenger vehicle occupants in preventing fatalities and injuries in highway traffic crashes. When lap/shoulder safety belts are used, the risk of fatal injury to front-seat passenger car occupants is reduced by 45 percent and the risk of moderate-to-critical injury is reduced by 50 percent.

Experiences in other states have shown that when a primary law is enacted, the use of seat belts increases. Enacting a primary law for this age group will help to lower the number of serious injuries and fatalities involving teenage drivers. This bill will only affect a small percentage of the Kansas population, but that population is over-represented in crashes and a law that will influence them to be safer in motor vehicles is good public policy.

At KDOT, we will continue to look for ways to increase the safety of the driving public, and we believe this is a positive step in that direction. If you have any questions, please contact Pete Bodyk, Chief of the Bureau of Traffic Safety at (785) 296-3756.



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Kansas Chapter

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TESTIMONY FOR SENATE BILL 294 AND SENATE BILL 211
Senate Committee in Transportation

The Kansas Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics is a non-profit organization representing over 95% of the practicing pediatricians in the state. We are pleased to offer our support of Senate Bills 294 and 211.

Teen drivers account for a disproportionate rate of motor vehicle accidents. Nationally teens make up 6% of total drivers but 14% of fatal crashes. In the state of Kansas teen drivers are involved in 20% of all motor vehicle accidents. The teen drivers themselves are not the only ones injured. Almost 60% of the fatalities were of passengers, occupants of other vehicles and pedestrians.

There are many factors associated with the increased risk in automobile accidents involving teens. Teens are involved in increased risk-taking behaviors. These behaviors may be particularly influenced by peer pressure, emotions and other stressors. For example teens tend to wear seat belts less, because wearing seat belts isn't considered "cool". And finally there is the feeling of invincibility the teens have which encourages them to take chances adults and more experienced drivers would not.

The single most important risk factor, however, is inexperience. The adolescent is less proficient in making adjustments to hazards and integrating speed. Decision making abilities may not be fully developed. They are more easily distracted. We now have data that shows that accident rates decrease as more experience is obtained.

One answer to these problems is the graduated drivers' license. Since 1996 the American Academy of Pediatrics has supported efforts to establish graduated drivers' licenses. Graduated drivers' licenses have been implemented successfully in many states. A review of 13 graduated driver license laws nationwide showed that in states with these laws total crashes decreased 26-41%, injuries decreased 4-43% and hospitalizations due to MVAs decreased 31%. SB294 would strengthen our current licensing law and protect not only the teen driver but the other people who are victims in these motor vehicle accidents. It also provides exceptions for our rural communities.

For much of the same reasons teens need a graduated driver's license they need laws requiring seat belt usage. We have discussed above some of the reasons why teens don't wear seat belts. As a result of these factors teens have lower rates of seat belt usage than other groups.

Kansas Maternal and Child Health data from 2004 shows that 48% of all deaths in the adolescent and young adult age range are due to motor vehicle accidents. We know from data that seat belt usage saves lives. We also know that primary seat belt laws increase seat belt usage. The next step is obvious. We owe it to our children to pass SB211.

In summary The Kansas Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics strongly encourages passage of SB294 and SB211 to help save the lives of Kansas citizens young and old.



TESTIMONY, SB 294

Presented by James R. Hanni,

Executive Vice President, Kansas Region & Public Affairs, AAA Allied Group

February 15, 2006

Senate Transportation Committee

AAA supports changes to the current licensing system in SB 294, recommended by the work of a citizen's task force, the Driving Force. The changes will help teens maximize the experience they need and minimize the risks to their safety reducing the number of car crashes, injuries and deaths.

We support the changes because the proposed system is proven to work as seen in many other states who have adopted similar features.

Finally, we support the changes because we know both parents and teens who have gone through a licensing system such as this approve of it.

Key Changes for effective reduction of car crashes:

- ◆ Preserve the Farm Permit. Research shows work-related crashes are minimal.
- ◆ One Year (Level I) Instruction Permit with adult supervision, as early as age 15. It gives teen experience that is proven to help reduce car crashes.
- ◆ An intermediate, "Restricted Driver's License" (Level II) stage. As early as age 16. Novice driver may drive without adult supervision, EXCEPT for just a few months longer, six to be exact, must continue adult supervised driving at night and with no more than one non-sibling passenger under age 21.
- ◆ Unrestricted license (Level III) as early as age 16 ½.
- ◆ Novice driver may advance to each level with no moving violations or seat belt infractions.
- ◆ No use of wireless devices while driving.

Basis of Our Support:

- ◆ All points made in Secretary of Transportation, Deb Miller's testimony. We concur that the size and scope of the injuries and fatalities involving novice drivers in Kansas is a public health epidemic, recurring year after year without being addressed like other public health issues. **(Chart A shows driver risk by age)**
- ◆ 45 out of 50 states have an intermediate stage of licensing in their graduated driver license system. Technically, without the intermediate stage, we lack a true *graduated* license system (GDL) **(See Chart B)**.

- ◆ While 64% of teen car crashes in Kansas occur in urban areas, 72% of all fatal car crashes occur in rural areas. For 15 and 16 year-old drivers in Kansas, 90% and 81%, respectively, of all fatal car crashes occur on rural non-interstate roads **(See Chart C)**.
- ◆ Teen car crashes affect all road users, not simply the teens involved. According to a 2006 AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety study, in Kansas, nearly six out of ten persons killed in a 15-17 year old driver crash are someone other than the 15-17 year-old driver **(Chart D)**.
- ◆ It addresses the need for gaining experience behind the wheel with adult supervision, and has dramatically reduced teen crashes in many other states.
- ◆ It protects novice drivers from their greatest exposure to car crash risk: driving at night and with other teen passengers **(Chart E)**. As proposed, these protections in the intermediate stage of licensing will result in a substantial reduction in car crashes for 16 year-old drivers, as is *proven* in other states **(N.Carolina Chart F)**.
- ◆ Parents and teens see a GDL system, like the one proposed, as reasonable and they strongly endorse it. There are no differences in approval between urban and rural, parents or teens **(See Charts G & H)**.

Conclusion

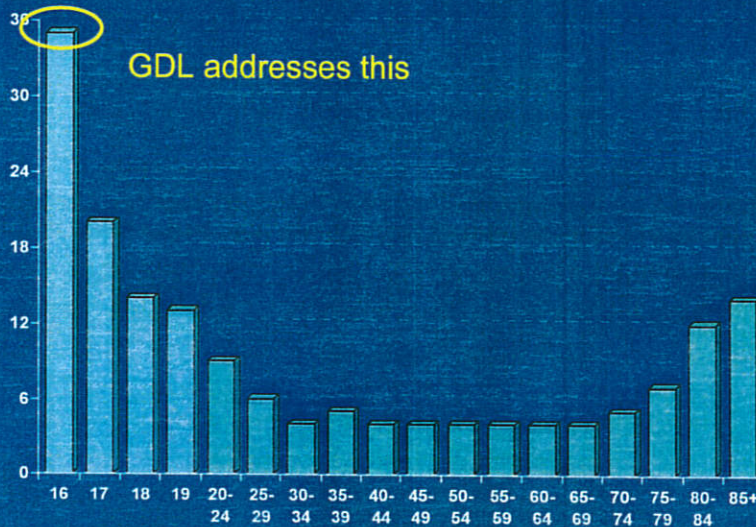
Because so many other states have enacted true GDL systems, there is plenty of evidence that GDL as proposed clearly works to reduce novice driver car crashes significantly. GDL Systems, like what is proposed for Kansas, produce 20-25% reductions in daytime crashes and 47-52% reductions in nighttime crashes.

In addition to parent and teen attitudes of approval and there is wide public support for improving our GDL system. Many organizations besides AAA, including Kansas Farm Bureau, support this bill. These changes will strongly benefit both rural and urban parents and teens, however, experience indicates greater reductions will occur for rural than for urban families.

There are few votes that can do more for the families of Kansas than an affirmative vote on this bill. On behalf of the safety of the families of the nearly quarter million AAA members we represent in Kansas, I urge you to vote this bill favorably out of the Senate Transportation Committee.

Crash Rates by Age

Driver crash involvements per million miles traveled



Source: A.F. Williams, Journal of Safety Research 34 (2003) 5-15

Chart A

The State of the States in GDL

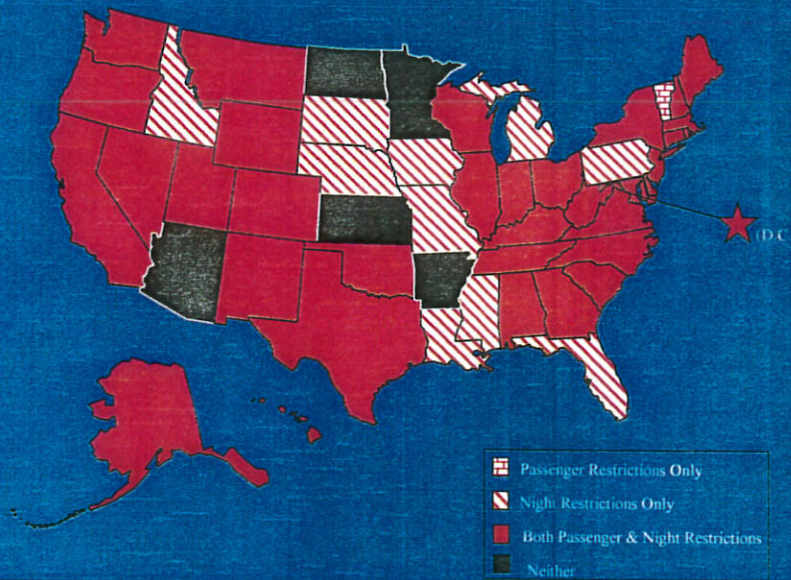


Chart B

Kansas Teen Crash location by driver age

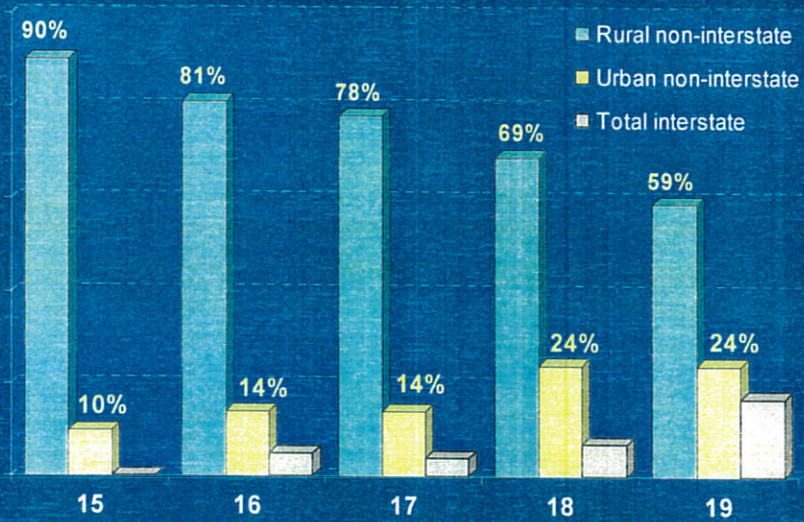


Chart C

Victim role in teen driver fatal crashes

Kansas 1995 - 2004

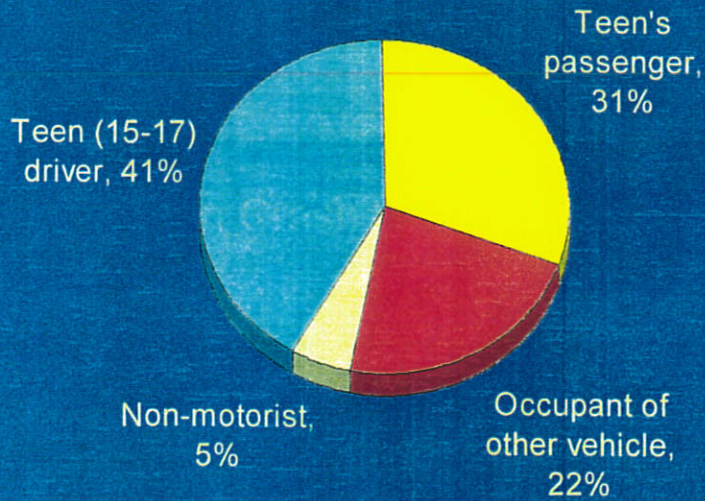


Chart D

Increased Risk of Driver Death by Number of Passengers and Driver Age

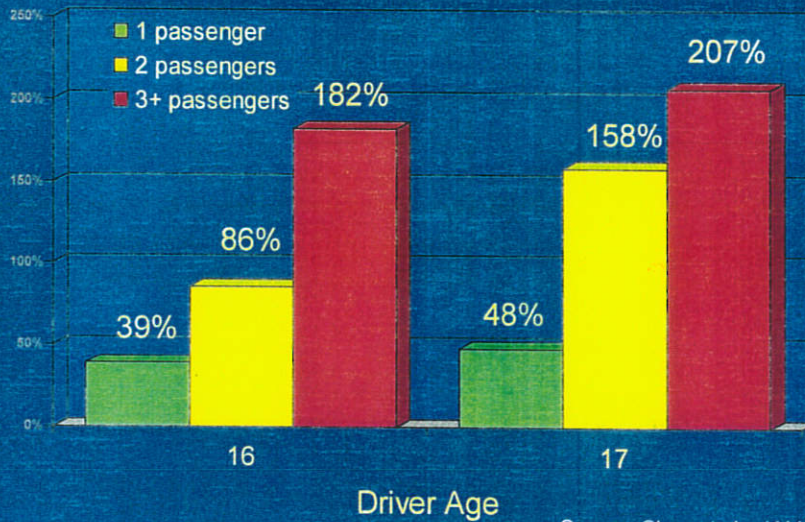


Chart E

Source: Chen et al., JAMA, 2000.

Crash Rate Ratios for 16 & 17 year-olds vs. 25-54 year-old, NC 1991-2003

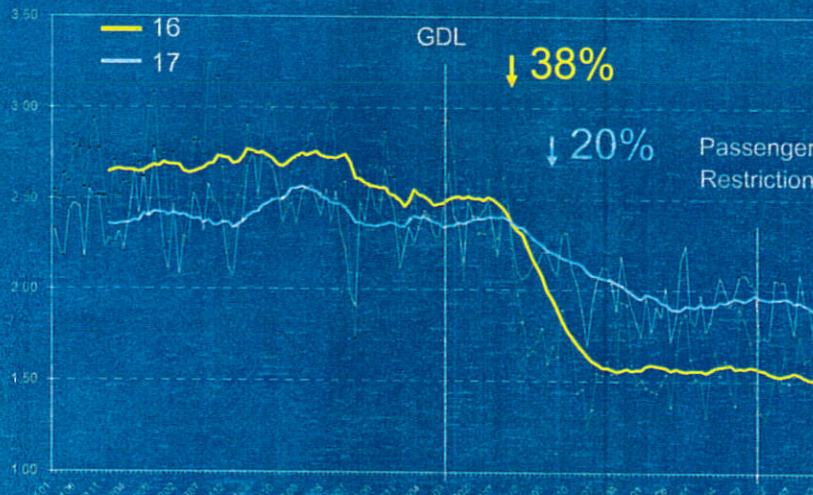


Chart F

Parents' overall opinion of GDL by residence
NC 1999



Chart G

Teens' overall opinions of GDL by residence
NC 1999

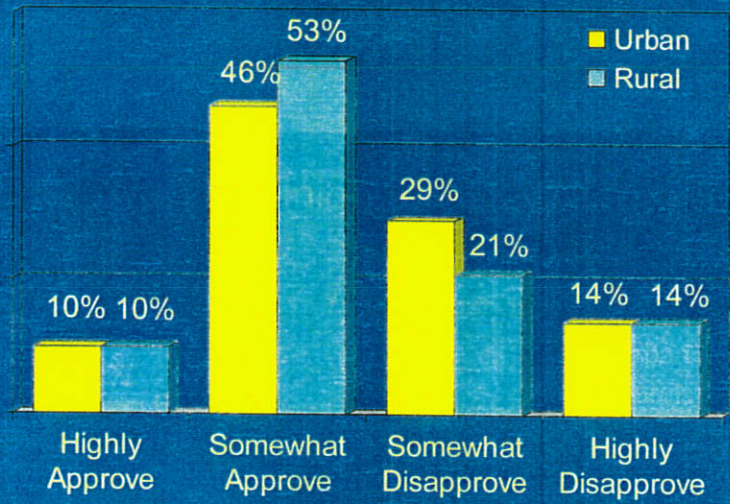


Chart H

**Testimony of
Robert D. Foss, PhD.
Director, Center for the Study of Young Drivers
Highway Safety Research Center
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill**

***Regarding Senate Bill 294*
Kansas Senate Transportation Committee**

February 15, 2006

I was born in Hays, and spent several of my formative years in McPherson and Great Bend. As a teenager I worked summers on my grandfather's and uncle's farms in Pawnee county. Because Kansas will always be my home, I am particularly pleased to have the opportunity to speak to you about this bill which, if enacted, would enhance my native state's graduated driver licensing (GDL) system.

I have devoted much of my adult life to teaching young people about the joys, benefits and challenges of family life, and doing research to determine how to enhance the quality of family life. One major focus of my research has been the search for ways to prevent the emotional devastation that parents experience when a child is injured or killed. Because motor vehicle crashes are the main threat to the lives of children, much of my work has been concerned with preventing those crashes and the injuries that result.

Along with some of my colleagues, I recently completed a report for the Transportation Research Board of the National Academies of Science documenting known effective strategies to reduce young driver crashes. We reviewed the existing research literature throughout the world and worked with nearly two dozen national experts on teen driving to create this report. The conclusion of that effort is that, by far, the most important and effective thing that states can do to protect young drivers – and everyone who shares the road with them – is to enact a comprehensive graduated driver licensing (GDL) system.

My new home state, North Carolina, enacted a GDL system in 1997 and the results have been dramatic. Our research findings in North Carolina are particularly relevant since the proposed legislation would enact a system in Kansas that is highly similar to that in North Carolina, which is considered to have among the best young driver licensing systems anywhere. Within a couple of years after GDL was enacted in North Carolina, crashes declined by 38% and 20% among 16 and 17 year-old drivers respectively. More serious crashes – those involving a death or injury requiring medical treatment – declined even more dramatically (47% and 37% among 16 and 17 year-olds, respectively).

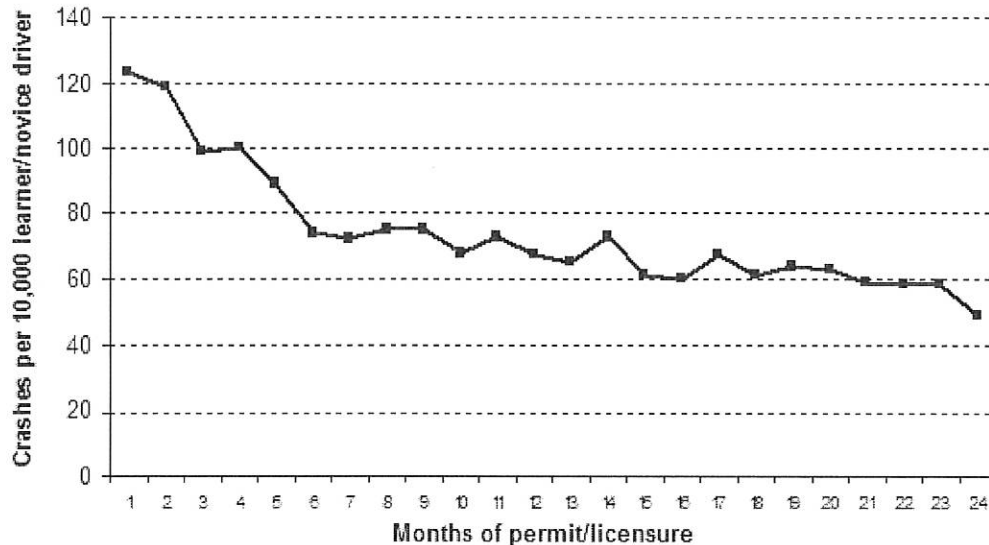
Our research indicates that, along with reducing crashes, GDL is overwhelmingly supported by parents. Though teens are less enthusiastic than parents, the majority of those who have experienced the system also support it. Only a tiny fraction of parents who have experienced the GDL process report any objections or dissatisfaction. Contrary to what is sometimes thought, by those who do not have teenagers, *parents see GDL as supporting them* rather than as interference in their parental prerogatives.

Among the happy, unanticipated, benefits of GDL is that the extended period of parent-supervised driving appears to bring many parents and teens closer together. Substantial proportions of both parents and teens report enjoying the time spent in supervised driving. Both the crash reductions and the high rates of parent approval seen in North Carolina are confirmed by studies in other states as well. Crash reductions of 25 - 30% are routinely found in high quality studies of GDL programs in other states.

The proposed revisions to the Kansas young driver licensing system are solid, but they do not overreach, as is sometimes the case in traffic safety efforts. Although some national advocacy groups call for a complete ban on teen passengers, and several states have enacted such bans, the research evidence does not clearly indicate that carrying a single passenger is particularly risky. The recommended passenger restriction, allowing a single teen passenger, matches the evidence on teen driver risks. It will impinge only modestly on typical teen life, because *only about 11-12% of 16 year-old driver trips involve more than one passenger*. Only those relatively uncommon, but highly dangerous, trips would be prohibited for the first few months during which teens learn to handle unsupervised driving.

The proposed legislation is also modest, but solid, in that it proposes that protective restrictions (passenger and night driving limits) last only for the first six months of unsupervised driving. This closely matches the research evidence regarding teen driver risk. As is shown in Figure 1, crash risks are very high during the initial months of unsupervised driving, but decline fairly rapidly in the initial six months, followed by a much slower continuing decline for the next few years. Some national groups call for restrictions on teens to last until they are 18, though there is no clear evidence to support the need for such an extended period.

Figure 1. Novice driver crash risk by month of licensure



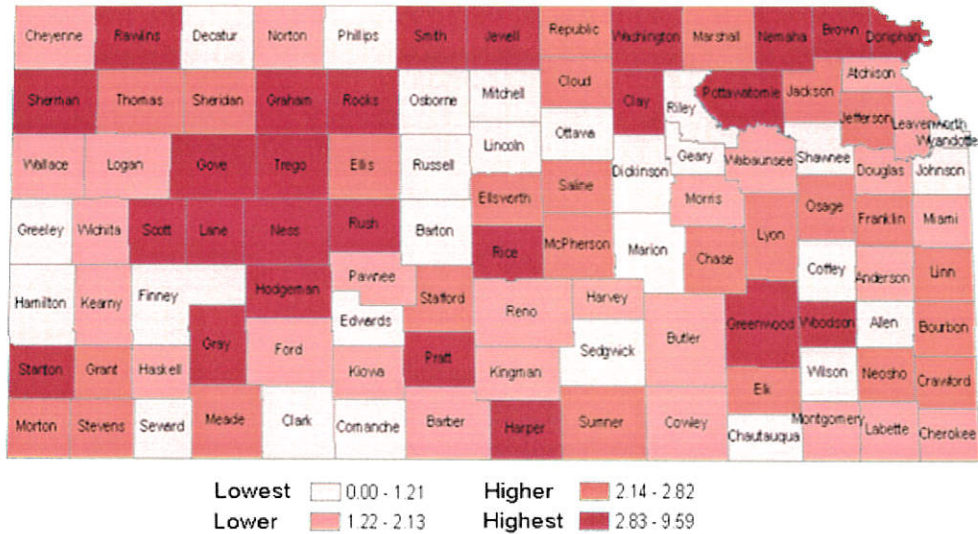
Source: Mayhew, Simpson & Pak (2003)

Rural vs. Urban Crash Risks

In view of what we in the research community know about young driver risks and the effects of GDL, it is clear that the greatest benefit of the proposed revision to the Kansas driver licensing system will be among teens living and driving in rural areas. This is because rural driving is more dangerous, especially for the least experienced drivers. Figure 2 shows the rate of fatal and

serious injury crashes per capita for Kansas counties during 2001 to 2005, clearly indicating that the more urban counties tend to have the lowest rates and the most rural experience substantially higher rates.

Figure 2. Average annual teen (14 – 17) fatal and serious injury crash rates per 10,000 population by county, 2001 – 2005.



Source: Kansas DOT, Chart by UNC-CH

Rural roads most dangerous

Most fatal crashes in Kansas occur on rural, non-interstate roads. There are many reasons for this. Although the opportunity to collide with another vehicle is less in a rural area:

- Rural roads tend to be older, less safely designed and less well maintained
- Rural travel speeds are generally higher (increasing both crash likelihood and severity)
- Nighttime lighting is generally poor on rural roads
- Emergency rescue services are more widely dispersed in rural areas
- Crashes are less likely to be reported quickly, especially if they involve only one vehicle – which is much more likely in rural areas.

The crash fatality rate per mile traveled on rural, non-interstate roads in Kansas is three times that for all other roads. By virtue of their lack of experience, young drivers are less able to handle any risky driving situation. That is particularly true for rural driving.

Because of this greater risk to rural teens, a graduated driver licensing system that protects novice drivers from the greatest crash risks, as they gain the driving experience that enables them to become safe drivers, is particularly valuable in a rural state like Kansas.

Rural families strongly endorse GDL and its components

Legislators representing rural areas are sometimes understandably concerned that the conditions necessary to ensure novice driver safety may be unduly burdensome to families living in small towns and rural areas. To examine the kinds of problems that rural residents might experience with a GDL system, we interviewed families whose teens were in, or had completed, the first two

stages of the GDL process. Comparing families who live in rural v. urban/suburban areas, it is clear that, as a group, rural families favor GDL as strongly as those living in suburban/urban areas (96% of both groups approve). Rural families (86%) are as likely as urban/suburban families (88%) to approve of the 6-month, night driving restriction (which begins at 9 p.m.). They are equally as likely to say that the 12-month learner permit period is either “about right” or “too short” (93% rural v. 94% urban/ suburban). There was no passenger restriction when these interviews were conducted, so we do not know about approval rates. More recent research indicates, however, that most parents require their teens to comply with the passenger restriction, suggesting that they support that as well as the other elements.

Summary

Graduated driver licensing dramatically reduces novice teen driver crashes. It is broadly endorsed by parents and it is also supported by teens to a degree that is surprising to many. Despite their different living circumstances and travel patterns, rural parents approve of GDL and its particular elements to the same degree that urban/suburban parents do.

In our interviews and discussions with several thousand families, parents repeatedly comment that holding teens to the protective restrictions that parents sense are appropriate is much easier for them to do when the state has incorporated them in its driver licensing system. I believe the parents of Kansas will be every bit as happy with the proposed GDL system as parents elsewhere have been.



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Kathleen Sebelius, Governor
Deb Miller, Secretary

<http://www.ksdot.org>

**TESTIMONY BEFORE
SENATE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE**

**REGARDING SENATE BILL 294
Graduated Drivers License**

February 15, 2007

Mr. Chairman and Committee Members:

My name is Deb Miller, Secretary of the Kansas Department of Transportation. I am here to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 294, an act relating to age requirements and limitations on driver's licenses. This legislation was one of the many recommendations from the *Driving Force*, a task force studying ways to reduce fatalities and injuries on Kansas roadways. According to research data provided by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) is a countermeasure with proven effectiveness in reducing novice driver crashes.

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death and serious injury for teenagers in Kansas as well as the United States. Nationally, motor vehicle crashes represent 39 percent of deaths for people between the ages of 16 and 20. In 2005, Kansas drivers aged 14 through 19 were involved in more than 16,000 crashes on Kansas roadways; wherein eighty teens were killed and more than 7,000 were injured. Although they make up only 7 percent of licensed drivers, young novice drivers are over-represented in crashes. They are involved in 13 percent of fatal crashes, and 20 percent of all crashes.

Two of the riskiest situations for young drivers to encounter are nighttime driving and driving with other teenage passengers in the vehicle. The most effective GDL systems restrict nighttime driving as well as limit the number of other teenage passengers in the vehicle. Statistics clearly illustrate that Kansas' current licensing system is not effective in reducing teen crashes. The current system does not provide enough supervised driving experience for young drivers, and it does not protect them from some of the riskiest driving situations. In order to best prepare our young citizens for a lifetime of safe driving, our licensing system must be changed to afford increased learning experiences in less risky situations.

NHTA released a report in June 2006 evaluating GDL systems across the United States. The report showed an 11 percent to 32 percent reduction in fatal crashes involving novice drivers after enactment of an effective GDL system. It is also important to note that funding for driver education must continue. Driver education courses provide a base of knowledge to young drivers that can be built upon as they progress through the GDL system. An effective system will incorporate driver education to provide basic beginner knowledge along with an opportunity for young drivers to gain needed experience in the least risky of situations.

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION
Dwight D. Eisenhower State Office Building

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Senate Transportation Committee
2-15-07

Attachment 9

Driving Force Recommendation Graduated Driver's Licensing in Kansas

CURRENT

PROPOSED CHANGES

	Instruction Permit	Instruction Permit
Age	Minimum 14 years old	Minimum 15 years old
Testing Required	Vision Written	Vision Written
Driver Education Required	No (permit is used to take driver education)	No (Driver Education is required to be taken during the Instruction Permit period)
Accompanied by a licensed driver at all times?	Yes	Yes. Supervising driver must be in front seat.
Wireless use restriction	No	No use of wireless devices while driving.
Seatbelt Use	Secondary Law	Primary Law for permit holder while driving. Seat belt violation committed by driver will be considered a violation of restriction.

	Farm Permit	Farm Permit
Age	Minimum 14 years old but less than 16 years old	Minimum 14 years old but less than 16 years old
Testing Required	Vision Written Drive (if not previously completed a Driver Education course)	Vision Written Drive (if not previously completed a Driver Education course)
Driver Education Required	No	No
Driving Restrictions	Yes Can drive unsupervised: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To and from school (no school activities) • To, from or in connection with any farm related work 	Yes Can drive unsupervised: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To and from school (but not to school activities) • To, from or in connection with any farm related work
Passenger Restriction	Yes. May not transport any non-sibling minor passenger.	Yes. May not transport any non-sibling minor passenger.
Wireless use restriction	No	No
Seatbelt Use	Secondary Law	Primary Law for permit holder while driving. Seat belt violation committed by driver will be considered a violation of restriction.

CURRENT

PROPOSED

	Restricted Driver's License	Restricted Driver's License
Age	Minimum 15 years old but less than 16 years old. Must have had an instruction permit for at least six months, Any person under age 16 with a restricted license, that is convicted of 2 or more moving violations will remain restricted until age 17.	Minimum 16 years old and have held an Instruction Permit for 12 months with no moving violations, seat belt infractions, or improper wireless device use committed within preceding 6 months.
Driver Education Required	Yes	Yes
Driving Restrictions	Yes Can drive unsupervised: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To and from school (no school activities) • To, from or in connection with employment or farm-related work 	Yes Can drive unsupervised: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Between the hours of 5 am – 9pm (Includes driving to school) • Or, when driving directly to or from work
Passenger Restriction	Yes. May not transport any non-sibling minor passenger.	Yes. When driving without a supervising driver, no more than one passenger under age 21 unless they are members of the immediate family.
Required Number of driving hours	Prior to age 16, applicant must provide affidavit showing at least 50 hours of adult supervised driving, with 10 of those hours being at night. If affidavit is not provided prior to age 16 the driver will remain restricted until age 17 or until affidavit is provided, whichever comes first.	Prior to receiving a Restricted Driver's License, applicant must provide affidavit showing at least 50 hours of adult supervised driving, with 10 of those hours being at night.
Wireless use restriction	No	No use of wireless devices while driving.
Seatbelt Use	Secondary Law	Primary Law for permit holder while driving. Seat belt violation committed by driver will be considered a violation of restriction.

	Non-Restricted Driver's License for 16 & 17 year olds	Non-Restricted Driver's License for 16 & 17 year olds
Age	Minimum 16 years old but less than 18 years old.	Minimum 16.5 years old but less than 18 years old and have held a Restricted Driver's License for 6 months with no moving violations, seat belt infractions, or improper wireless device use committed within preceding 6 months.
Testing Required	Vision Written Drive (if not previously completed a Driver Education course)	Vision Written
Driver Education Required	No	Yes
Required Number of driving hours	Driver must provide affidavit showing at least 50 hours of adult supervised driving, with 10 of those hours being at night, by a licensed driver at least 21 years old, and signed by a parent or guardian.	Hours are required prior to receiving Restricted Driver's License.
Wireless use restriction	No	No use of wireless devices while driving.
Seatbelt Use	Secondary Law	Primary Law for permit holder while driving. Seat belt violation committed by driver will be considered a violation of restriction.

**Testimony on SB 294
to
Senate Transportation Committee**

**Presented by
Director Mike Watson
Riley County Police Department
Kansas Association of Chiefs of Police**

February 15, 2007

Good morning, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. My name is Director Mike Watson, and on behalf of the Riley County Police Department and the Kansas Association of Chiefs of Police, it is a pleasure to appear before you today in support off Senate Bill 294.

Law enforcement agencies all too often respond to injury and fatality crashes involving teens. All too often, it's a lack of experience, too many passengers, or the distraction of an electronic device that contribute to the crash. One of the saddest things for us to do is tell a parent or guardian that their child was severely injured or killed in a crash that could have been prevented with more experience and maturity behind the wheel. It's equally difficult to tell someone's spouse and children their loved one isn't coming home because they were struck by teenager who didn't know how to drive in snow or rain or because the teen driver was showing off for his/her friends. In small communities, such as those throughout Riley County, traffic crashes involving teens are devastating. It is unfortunate that tragedies like these are sometimes what it takes to compel teens to be more responsible drivers.

A Graduated Driver's License (GDL) program would be a proactive measure to counteract the high crash rates among teens in Kansas and across the country. The numbers before you from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment and the Kansas Department of Transportation show that Kansas is no different from the rest of the United States when it comes to the high proportion of teens involved in motor vehicle crashes. Other states that have gone to GDL programs have seen positive results in lives saved through a comprehensive GDL program. Implementing a GDL program in Kansas is one way for law enforcement officers and lawmakers to work together to protect and serve the public.

Law enforcement agencies recognize this legislation may pose some challenges in enforcing the GDL rules. However, enforcing the stipulations of a GDL program cannot be half as difficult as telling a parent their child was severely injured or killed in a vehicle crash. I ask that you give us the tools we need to save more teens from being killed or killing others on Kansas roadways. The Riley County Police Department and the Kansas Association of Chiefs of Police support Senate Bill 294, and I am happy to answer questions you have at this time.

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*Kathleen Sebelius, Governor
Roderick L. Bremby, Secretary*

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
AND ENVIRONMENT

www.kdheks.gov

Division of Health

Testimony on SB 294

To

Senate Committee on Transportation

By Howard Rodenberg, MD, MPH
Director, Division of Health

Kansas Department of Health and Environment

February 15, 2007

Chairman Donovan and members of the Committee on Transportation, my name is Howard Rodenberg and I am the director of the Division of Health at the Kansas Department of Health and Environment. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today in support of Senate Bill 294, which proposes to strengthen graduated drivers licensing laws (GDL) in Kansas.

Unintentional injuries kill more young Kansans than any other cause, and motor vehicle crashes result in nearly half of these deaths. In 2002, more than 5,000 teens ages 16 to 19 died of injuries caused by motor vehicle crashes nationally (CDC 2004). Crash rates among young drivers age 16 –19, per mile driven, are higher than those for all other age groups and the crash risk among 16 to 17 year old drivers is almost three times as high as among 18 to 19 year olds drivers. (Insurance Institute for Highway Safety)

Kansas statistics show a similar pattern. While teen drivers ages 15 – 18 account for only 6.7% of all Kansas registered drivers, they represent 20.1% of all crashes. Fifty -one Kansas kids died and 5,993 more were injured as a result of car crashes in our state in 2004 (Kansas Department of Transportation, 2004). According to the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) drivers ages 14 through 19 were involved in 17,978 crashes in 2004 for an estimated cost of \$653,832,300.

Graduated Driver licensing programs have become an increasingly popular approach to managing the serious problem of high rates of fatal and nonfatal crashes among beginning drivers. These programs vary from state to state, but most are designed to provide novice drivers the opportunity to gain driving experience in less risky circumstances, typically implementing a combination of provisions such as those described in the Johns Hopkins study cited below. Forty

one states and the District of Columbia have already instituted some form of GDL that includes two phases prior to full licensure.

The effectiveness of Graduated driver licensing laws as a prevention strategy has been widely demonstrated. According to a study conducted by researchers at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, graduated driver licensing programs reduce incidence of fatal crashes of 16 year old drivers by an average of 11 percent. Using data from 1994-2004 collected by NHTSA's Fatality Analysis Reporting System and the US Census Bureau the study group examined fatality outcomes with the number of components contained in the respective graduated drivers license law. Seven components commonly found in graduated license laws were chosen for analysis and these included: 1) a minimum age of 15 ½ for obtaining a learner permit; 2) a waiting period after obtaining a learner permit of at least 3 months before applying for an intermediate license; 3) a minimum of 30 hours of supervised driving; 4) minimum age of at least 16 years for obtaining an intermediate state license; 5) minimum age of at least 17 years for full licensing; 6) a nighttime driving restriction; 7) a restriction on carrying passengers. Comparing states with five of these program components to states without graduated driver licensing programs, the researchers reported an 18 percent difference in fatal crashes involving 16 year old drivers. Programs with six or seven components were associated with a 21 percent reduction. The authors concluded that the most comprehensive graduated driver licensing programs result in the best reduction of fatal crashes of 16 year old drivers.

The states who have responded to the national priority of protecting young drivers by raising their minimum driving ages and implementing GDL are experiencing the pay off. For example, after North Carolina adopted a three-phase licensing system, which included nighttime restrictions, the number of 16 year olds involved in motor vehicle crashes dropped 23 percent. The number of fatal collisions was cut in half. Similarly, during the first three years after California enacted legislation restricting those younger than 18 from driving with passengers younger than 20, an estimated eight lives were saved and almost 700 injuries prevented in averted crashes.

The national 2005 crash statistics indicate that headway is being made in reducing crash deaths, thanks in large measure to the success of graduated licensing, which phases in full driving privileges among beginners. Deaths of 16 and 17 year-olds in passenger vehicles fell 8 percent in 2005, to 1,631 from 1,773 the year before. Among 13-19 year-olds, deaths fell 6 percent and have declined about 40 percent since 1975. The death rate per population of teens is the lowest on record. Still, we have a long way to go. In 2005 teens accounted for 12 percent of motor vehicle deaths and only 10 percent of the US population. Fatal crashes involving young drivers typically involve a single vehicle plus driver error and/or speeding. The crashes often occur when other young people are in vehicles driven by teens, so teenagers are disproportionately involved as passengers as well as drivers. Of the 4,440 teenagers killed in passenger vehicle crashes last year, 45 percent were passengers. Sixty-one percent of these deaths occurred in crashes in which another teenager was driving. (Insurance Institute for Highway Safety November 21, 2006)

It is time for Kansas to act on the evidence base that calls for graduated drivers licensing. Enacting a Graduated Drivers License bill will save lives and reduce injuries to Kansas teens.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide this information to the committee. I will be happy to answer any questions you might have.



K A N S A S

WILLIAM R. SECK, SUPERINTENDENT

KANSAS HIGHWAY PATROL

KATHLEEN SEBELIUS, GOVERNOR

**Testimony on SB 294
to
Senate Transportation Committee**

**Presented by
Colonel William Seck
Superintendent, Kansas Highway Patrol**

February 15, 2007

Good morning, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. My name is Colonel William Seck, and on behalf of the Kansas Highway Patrol, it is a pleasure to appear before you today in support off Senate Bill 294.

The Patrol is dedicated to the promotion of traffic safety and the reduction of injuries and fatalities from motor vehicle crashes. Our experience as a law enforcement agency supports education and experience as key elements in developing safe driving habits, especially with teen drivers. We recognize that experience and maturity are two significant factors in a large number of crashes involving young drivers. Patrol troopers see the horrors of what happens when teens try to "show off" for their friends or when their peers distract their attention from driving. Teens also lack practical knowledge of driving, particularly in adverse weather conditions, such as heavy rain, dense fog, snow, and ice.

Graduated Driver's License programs, also known as GDL, are proven to help teens gain maturity and experience behind the wheel, which assist in reducing the high crash rates for drivers in their age group. Although teens make up a small percentage of licensed drivers, they are over-represented in injury and fatality crashes. Teens rank highest in crashes attributed to speeding, aggressive and reckless driving, and distractions. All these factors could be minimized with education, experience, and maturity. The provisions set forth in Senate Bill 294 tackle issues proven to reduce teen crash rates, such as restricting use of electronic drivers, number of passengers, and nighttime driving.

The Patrol recognizes challenges that may exist when considering a bill, such as SB 294, that would bring about a dramatic change in the way of life for young Kansans. The Highway Patrol supports SB 294, and we ask that your committee give this bill favorable support. I appreciate the opportunity to address you today. At this time, I will stand for questions.

###



Steve Blackiston

**National
Transportation
Safety Board**

Safety Information

Washington, D.C. 20594

**STATEMENT OF THE
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
FOR THE
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
KANSAS SENATE
ON
SENATE BILL 294
GRADUATED DRIVER LICENSING
TOPEKA, KANSAS
FEBRUARY 15, 2007**

Chairman Donovan and members of the Transportation Committee, the National Transportation Safety Board offers this statement regarding the National Transportation Safety Board's graduated driver licensing (GDL) recommendations and our investigations of accidents involving young drivers. Senate Bill 294 is a strong measure that will save the lives of many teenagers in Kansas.

The National Transportation Safety Board is an independent Federal agency charged by Congress to investigate transportation accidents, determine their probable cause, and make recommendations to prevent their recurrence. The recommendations that arise from our investigations and safety studies are our most important product. The Safety Board cannot mandate implementation of these recommendations. However, in our 39-year history, organizations and government bodies have adopted more than 80 percent of our recommendations.

The Safety Board has recognized for many years that motor vehicle crashes are responsible for more deaths than crashes in all other transportation modes combined. More than 90 percent of all transportation-related deaths each year result from highway crashes. A disproportionate number of these highway crashes involve teen drivers age 15 through 20, young people who have only recently obtained their licenses to drive. Young drivers have been the focus of U.S. driver licensing systems primarily because they constitute the largest group of beginners and have the highest crash risk.

THE PROBLEM

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, traffic crashes account for 40 percent of all deaths among 15-20 year olds, making traffic crashes the leading cause of death for this age group, more than from suicides or drugs. Crash rates for young drivers are significantly higher than crash rates for other driving populations. Young drivers age 15-20 years make up about 6.3 percent of the driving population, but comprise 13.6 percent of the drivers involved in fatal crashes. Further, more than 21 percent of all highway fatalities occur in crashes involving teen drivers. Crash statistics for Kansas are just as ominous. Teens make up 8.8 percent of the driving population, but constitute about 15 percent of the drivers involved in fatal crashes. More than 22.7 percent of the deaths on Kansas roads occur in crashes involving teen drivers.

While these numbers define a serious problem, it is individual tragedies that make us recognize the critical importance of addressing this issue. On December

21, 2005, a 1993 Toyota Tercel, operated by a 16-year-old driver, crossed over the centerline and into oncoming traffic on US 69 near Pittsburg, Kansas. The Toyota collided with a 1994 Dodge Intrepid, killing the 16-year-old driver and the rear seat teen passenger in the Toyota and seriously injuring the front seat teen passenger in the Toyota and the two occupants in the Dodge. Witness statements indicated that a ringing cell phone distracted the Toyota driver and that the distraction caused the driver to turn the wheel toward the shoulder as she reached for the ringing phone.

While the emotional costs are staggering, the financial costs are equally alarming. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) calculated that the lifetime cost to society for each fatality is over \$977,000, and those not directly involved in crashes pay for nearly three-quarters of all crash costs, primarily through insurance premiums, taxes, and travel delay. Therefore, the tragic lives lost across our nation cost society billions of dollars.

A number of studies by Federal agencies, the States, private organizations, and others have shown that 16-year-olds are more likely to be involved in single vehicle crashes, be responsible for the crash, be cited for speeding, and carry more passengers in their vehicles than older drivers. Such crashes are most likely to occur from 10 p.m. to midnight on Friday and Saturday nights. Although young drivers do only 20 percent of their driving at night, over half the fatalities of young drivers occur during nighttime hours.

A recent analysis of 10 years of data conducted by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety found that the majority of fatalities in teen crashes are persons other than the teen drivers. This is consistent with the Safety Board's review of young driver crashes. In Kansas, AAA found that almost 60 percent of those killed in accidents involving teen drivers were either passengers, occupants of other vehicles, or non-motorists such as pedestrians.

Young drivers typically carry more passengers in their cars than older drivers, and these passengers are usually around the same age as the driver. Often this results in a deadly combination of inattention, inexperience, and immaturity. A recent study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association concluded that the risk of death increased significantly with each additional teen passenger transported by a teen driver. In single vehicle crashes involving teen

drivers, two-thirds of fatally injured passengers were also teens (between ages 15 and 19).

A frequent contributing factor to crashes, injuries, and fatalities involving teens is the decision by the young novice driver and his or her peers not to use seat belts. Nationally, from 1996 through 2005, at least 39 percent of motor vehicle occupants involved in fatal crashes were unrestrained, and at least 57 percent of fatally injured motor vehicle occupants were unrestrained. As abysmal as these numbers are, seat belt use among the teen population is worse. For the same years, at least 48 percent of teen occupants age 15 through age 20 who were involved in fatal crashes were unrestrained. Over 62 percent of fatally injured teens were unrestrained. In Kansas, at least 64 percent of the teens involved in fatal crashes while riding in motor vehicles were unrestrained. Over 73 percent of the fatally injured teens were unrestrained. Previous research has indicated that belt use among teen occupants is particularly low in States with secondary enforcement seat belt laws.

Our current driver education system does not teach young people to drive; it teaches them to pass a test. Learning to drive is a long-term process, one that cannot be effectively managed through the traditional driver education program. Once the basic skills are learned, extensive additional “on the job” training without distractions, and with the assistance of a more mature and experienced driver is needed. As their skills and maturity develop, young novice drivers can then proceed to full licensure.

RECOMMENDED SOLUTIONS

Graduated Driver Licensing

After reviewing crashes involving drivers under the age of 21, in 1993, the Safety Board recommended that Kansas and the other States take several specific actions, including implementation of a comprehensive provisional license system for young novice drivers, also known as graduated driver licensing (GDL). The model program requires young novice drivers to proceed through three stages—a learner’s permit, an intermediate or provisional license, and a full license. GDL establishes restrictions so that, until the driver has had an opportunity to gain experience, initial driving occurs in less dangerous circumstances. Restrictions are

lifted after successful completion of the learning and intermediate stages, without any moving violations or crashes attributed to the driver.

Strengthening your graduated driver licensing law is an important step that will reduce needless deaths and injuries on Kansas highways and help thousands of young drivers in Kansas to adjust to their new driving responsibilities.

Based on research by the Safety Board, NHTSA, and others, the Board recommends that the basic elements of a three-stage GDL program include the following:

- **A learner's permit with—**
 - A minimum 6-month holding period, during which a licensed driver who is at least 21 years old supervises the permit holder.
 - A minimum period of 6 months without at-fault crashes or traffic violations (and accelerated penalties if the driver has an at-fault crash or traffic violation) before proceeding to the intermediate or provisional license.
 - At least 50 hours of supervised driving practice with a licensed driver who is at least 21 years old.
 - A prohibition on the use of interactive wireless communication devices while driving.
 - Mandatory seat belt use and zero tolerance of alcohol use (under age 21).
- **An intermediate stage with—**
 - A minimum 6-month holding period for the intermediate or provisional license.
 - A nighttime driving restriction that prohibits the intermediate or provisional license holder from driving unsupervised at night, particularly between the hours of midnight and 5:00 a.m.
 - A passenger restriction that allows no more than one other passenger in the vehicle, unless the driver is accompanied by a supervising licensed adult at least 21 years old.
 - A minimum period of 6 months without at-fault crashes or traffic violations (and accelerated penalties if the driver has an at-fault crash or traffic violation) before proceeding to the full license.
 - A cell phone (wireless communications device) use restriction while driving for at least 6 months of the intermediate stage.

- Mandatory seat belt use and zero tolerance of alcohol use (under age 21).
- **Full license with—**
 - Mandatory seat belt use and zero tolerance of alcohol use (under age 21).

Nighttime Driving Restrictions

Nighttime driving restrictions are especially important and effective in reducing crashes. Forty-three percent of teen motor vehicle deaths in 2001 occurred between 9:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. Studies have revealed that nighttime driving restrictions are associated with crash reductions of up to 60 percent during the restricted hours. A 1984 study of nighttime driving restrictions in four States found among 16-year-old drivers that crashes were reduced by 69 percent in Pennsylvania, 62 percent in New York, 40 percent in Maryland, and 25 percent in Louisiana. Because many of these crashes occur in the evening hours, a greater crash reduction is achieved when the restriction starts earlier in the night. Many States include conditions or exemptions related to work or school, and may limit routes or number of passengers as well.

Many parents and even young drivers support the restriction when they understand the justification for it. A telephone survey of 16- to 18-year-olds in four States with such restrictions indicated that 47 percent in Indiana, 63 percent of the teens surveyed in Illinois, 67 percent in New York, and 80 percent in Pennsylvania were in favor of some kind of night driving restrictions for beginning teen drivers. A November 1994 survey by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) found that 74 percent of parents of 17-year-olds favor night driving restrictions for beginning drivers. Of those in favor, 48 percent preferred a restriction beginning at 10 p.m.

IIHS conducted follow-up surveys in 1999 of parents in Connecticut and Florida whose children had recently obtained their driver's licenses. These parents were even more supportive than they had been during initial interviews, before their teens had begun the licensing process. Few parents reported that the laws had inconvenienced them. Many were in favor of additional requirements, such as passenger restrictions, that were not currently part of their State's laws.

Passenger Restrictions

In 2002, the Safety Board added a passenger restriction to its original GDL recommendation after investigating several crashes and reviewing new research on the involvement of young novice drivers in crashes. The crash investigations and research illustrated the tragic consequences of allowing inexperienced young drivers to drive with multiple teen passengers in the vehicle.

The presence of teen passengers can adversely influence the risk-taking behavior of teen drivers, leading to crashes with increased injuries and death for both the drivers and their passengers. The relative risk of death among 16- and 17-year-old drivers who have at least one passenger in the car is substantially greater than the risk when driving alone. The risk increases with each additional passenger. Carrying at least three teen passengers results in a threefold increase in the probability of a teen in that vehicle being killed.

The National Committee on Uniform Traffic Laws and Ordinances added a passenger restriction to its Model Graduated Licensing Law in 2000, and incorporated it into the Uniform Vehicle Code (UVC). Elements of the UVC model law include the following:

- No more than one passenger under age 20 is allowed unless a supervising driver is present or until the driver receives full licensure.
- Passenger exemptions are granted for family members to ride with an unsupervised provisional licensed driver.

Based on the available research, the UVC model law, and FARS data, the Safety Board concluded that by restricting to zero or one the number of passengers carried by teen drivers during the intermediate stage, States can substantially reduce crashes involving young novice drivers and can reduce fatalities among teen occupants. The Board also concluded that if the passenger restriction lasts only a few months, it is unlikely to have a substantial safety benefit. The Board, therefore, believes that Kansas should restrict young novice drivers with an intermediate license from carrying more than one passenger under the age of 20 until they receive an unrestricted license or for at least 6 months (whichever is longer).

Cell Phone (Wireless Communication Device) Restrictions

In 2003, the Safety Board examined the role that driver distraction plays in motor vehicle crashes, especially when the driver is inexperienced. The Board concluded that current State laws are inadequate to protect young, novice drivers from distractions that can lead to crashes. The Board recommended that States enact legislation to prohibit holders of learner's permits and intermediate licenses from using interactive wireless communication devices while driving. The recommendation is derived from the Board's investigation of the February 1, 2002, Ford Explorer Sport collision with a Ford Windstar minivan and a Jeep Grand Cherokee on Interstate 95/495 near Largo, Maryland.

This crash involved multiple risk factors, some of which are associated with young drivers. The crash driver, who was 20 years old, was unbelted, and had had only an estimated 50 hours of driving experience. She was operating a short-wheelbase sport utility vehicle, with which she was unfamiliar and she was driving 15-20 miles over the speed limit, while talking on a handheld wireless telephone. The crash caused the death of five people including the young driver.

Learning how to drive and becoming comfortable in traffic requires all the concentration a novice driver can muster. According to a 2001 study, even experienced drivers engaged in wireless telephone conversations were unaware of traffic movements around them. Moreover, the use of wireless communication devices has become increasingly prevalent. Recent NHTSA research documented that an estimated 6 percent of drivers used hand held cell phones during daylight hours in 2005. This translates into approximately 974,000 drivers on the road nationwide at any time during the day that are using a hand-held phone.

In January 2002, New Jersey passed a law prohibiting holders of special learner's permits, driver's examination permits, and provisional driver's licenses from using any interactive wireless communication device while operating a motor vehicle. On May 23, 2003, the Governor of Maine signed a law restricting drivers under age 18, including persons with an instruction permit and holders of restricted licenses, from "operating a motor vehicle while using a mobile phone." Today, 14 States and the District of Columbia restrict cell phone use by drivers with a learner's and/or intermediate license. The Safety Board recommends that Kansas enact similar legislation and prohibit holders of learner's permits and

intermediate licenses from using interactive wireless communication devices while driving.

STATE IMPLEMENTATION

Beginning drivers should be introduced gradually to the driving experience. They should be provided the maximum time to practice, under the safest possible real-world conditions. They should be given the opportunity to gradually develop the skills needed for full licensure. For young drivers to have the chance to develop their skills, we need to create a support system that involves parents and guardians. We need to quickly identify young problem drivers before bad habits and behaviors become ingrained, and then take action to correct those problems. GDL has been described as “training wheels for young drivers.” This analogy makes good sense; we do not proceed from walking to riding a bicycle in one step. We need training wheels to make the driving process safer.

There has been a revolution in driver licensing laws in the past 10 years. Virtually every State has strengthened its driver licensing system. With the 2006 enactment of a comprehensive law in Kentucky, 45 States and the District of Columbia have a 3-stage licensing system. Today, 44 States and the District of Columbia have a nighttime driving restriction, and 35 States and the District of Columbia have some form of passenger restriction. However, Kansas has not implemented any of these provisions.

With the enactment of Senate Bill 294, Kansas will address all the elements of the Safety Board’s graduated licensing recommendations. Kansas will have one of the strongest 3-stage licensing systems, including a 1-year mandatory holding period for the first stage and a requirement that drivers remain violation free before graduating to the next stage. The nighttime driving restriction in Senate Bill 294 is especially valuable because it begins at 9:00 p.m., thereby covering the most dangerous hours of the day for teenage drivers. The proposed passenger and cell phone restrictions also satisfy the Board’s recommendations and will therefore reduce crashes, injuries, and fatalities.

SUCCESS STORIES

GDL does make a difference. According to the National Safety Council, 16-year-old drivers in States with GDL systems are involved in 33 percent fewer traffic crashes. At a 2007 symposium on young driver crashes, a representative from the IIHS noted that the number of teens killed in highway crashes is the lowest it has been since 1992, despite having the highest teen population since 1977. As noted by another researcher from the University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute, at least 26 studies on GDL effectiveness have reported positive findings, including fatality reductions between 5 and 73 percent.

Individual States have had great success with GDL. In 2001, after Iowa enacted GDL, the Iowa Department of Transportation reported that 16-year-old drivers were involved in 20 percent fewer traffic crashes than the same group in 1998, the last year before the system was adopted. In addition, 16-year-old drivers received 38 percent fewer traffic convictions than in 1998.

North Carolina implemented a comprehensive graduated licensing system with a 9:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m. nighttime driving restriction in December 1997. A 2003 review of North Carolina's crash data found a 23-percent reduction in injuries and deaths involving 16-year-old drivers. Nighttime crashes (during the restricted hours) decreased more than those during daytime hours. Both the number of crashes and the rate, based on population, declined dramatically.

Reviews from other States have consistently shown significant crash reductions:

- **California** – A review by the Auto Club of Southern California found that there was a 20 percent reduction in at-fault fatal and injury crashes for 16-year-old drivers. Injuries and fatalities of teen passengers decreased by 40 percent.
- **Delaware** – For drivers 16 years old, fatal crashes decreased by 43 percent and all crashes decreased by 42 percent. For drivers 17 years old, fatal crashes decreased by 72 percent and all crashes decreased by 21 percent.
- **Florida** – For drivers age 15 through age 17, IIHS found a 9-percent reduction in fatal and injury crashes.
- **Michigan** – For drivers 16 years old, the risk of being involved in a crash in 1999 was 25 percent lower than the risk in 1996.

- **Louisiana** – For drivers 15 years old, crashes fell by 25 percent during the nighttime driving restriction hours.
- **New York** – For 16- and 17-year-old drivers, the nighttime driving restriction resulted in a 62-percent crash reduction.
- **Pennsylvania** – GDL is credited with a 27-percent reduction in crashes, a 32-percent reduction in injuries, and a 58-percent reduction in fatalities. For drivers under age 18, there was a 69-percent reduction in crashes during the nighttime driving restriction hours.

CONCLUSION

From 1997 through 2004, across the nation, more than 72,000 people died in crashes involving teen drivers. In that period in Kansas, almost 950 people died.

Highway crashes involving young drivers will remain a serious and persistent problem unless concrete and comprehensive steps are taken. Our young people are this Nation's most valuable resource, one that must be nurtured and protected. Too many of them are being killed and injured unnecessarily.

Mr. Chairman, the Safety Board asks that you enact legislation to improve your existing GDL system. We urge you to require a minimum holding period for learner's permits, to require at least 50 hours of supervised driving practice in the learner's permit stage, and to add nighttime driving, passenger and cell phone restrictions.

The Board believes an effective combination of tough, fair laws; vigorous enforcement; and an intensive, targeted educational campaign is needed. We are so convinced of graduated driver licensing's life-saving benefit that we have included GDL on the Board's list of "Most Wanted" recommendations. A comprehensive GDL system is one of the most effective actions that the Kansas Legislature can take to save both young lives and the lives of others involved in crashes with young drivers.

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Jan Stegelman
Preventing accidental injury.

February 15, 2007

**Testimony Presented to the
Senate Committee on Transportation
SB 294**

Safe Kids Kansas, a nonprofit coalition of 67 statewide organizations and businesses is dedicated to preventing accidental injuries to Kansas children ages 0-14. We are pleased to support Senate Bill 294 – Graduated Drivers License for teen drivers.

Motor vehicle crashes are still the leading cause of death for Kansas children ages one through 17. Teen drivers account for over 20% of all the motor vehicle crashes in Kansas – even though they comprise only 7% of all registered drivers. These crashes also kill the passengers of teen drivers, pedestrians, and people in other vehicles. **The majority of people killed in teen driver motor vehicle crashes are people other than the teen driver themselves** – this includes children. In fact, of the 9,847 passengers of 15-to-17 year old drivers who were killed in crashes in the U.S. in the last ten years, 1,615 (16.4%) were younger than 15. Teen drivers killed an additional 969 children younger than 15 who were passengers in other vehicles. **This means that in the last 10 years, teen drivers in this country killed 2, 584 children ages 0-14.**

Graduated drivers licensing laws such as SB 294, which include limits on nighttime driving and prohibiting the use of cell phones, have been shown to decrease fatalities involving teen drivers. Specifically in regard to children riding with teen drivers, SB 294 would strengthen Kansas' graduated drivers licensing law by restricting teens' operation of a motor vehicle with non-sibling minor passengers.

The member organizations of Safe Kids Kansas and our 38 local coalitions and chapters support the passage of SB294 to protect young drivers, their passengers, and passengers in other vehicles. The result will be fewer Kansas children injured and killed in motor vehicle crashes.

Attachment:
Safe Kids Kansas Member Organizations

Safe Kids Kansas, Inc. is a nonprofit Coalition of 67 statewide organizations and businesses dedicated to preventing accidental injuries to Kansas children ages 0-14.



Safe Kids®

Kansas

Safe Kids Kansas Member Organizations

AAA Kansas
American Academy of Pediatrics - KS
Attorney General of Kansas
Board of Emergency Medical Services
Brain Injury Association of Kansas
Children's Mercy Hospital
Cusick Jost Consulting, LLC
Dillon Stores
Fire Education Association of Kansas
Fire Marshal's Association of Kansas
Kansas Academy of Family Practice Physicians
Kansas Action for Children
Kansas Association of Counties
Kansas Assoc. of Local Health Dept.
Kansas Assoc. of Osteopathic Medicine
Kansas Association of School Boards
Kansas Chapter International Assoc.
of Arson Investigators
Kansas Children's Cabinet & Trust Fund
Kansas Chiropractic Association
Kansas Cooperative Extension 4-H
Kansas Dental Association
Kansas Dept. of Health & Environment
Kansas Dept. of Human Resources
Kansas Dept. of Transportation
Kansas District of Kiwanis International
Kansas EMS Association
Kansas Emergency Nurses Association
Kansas Farm Bureau
Kansas Foundation For Medical Care
Kansas Head Start Association
Kansas Healthy Start Home Visitors
Kansas Highway Patrol
Kansas Hospital Association
Kansas Insurance Department
Kansas MADD
Kansas Medical Society
Kansas Motor Carriers Association
Kansas Operation Lifesaver
Kansas Parent Teacher Association
Kansas Public Health Association

Kansas Recreation & Park Association
Kansas Rehabilitation Hospital
Kansas SADD
Kansas Safety Belt Education Office
Kansas School Nurse Organization
Kansas State Association of Fire Chiefs
Kansas State Board of Education
Kansas State Fire Marshal's Office
Kansas State Firefighters Association
Kansas State Nurses Association
Kansas Trial Lawyers Association
KIDS AND CARS
KNEA
KUMC Burn Center
KUMC Trauma Program
NHTSA Regional Office
Mid-America Poison Control Center
Office of the Governor
Safety & Health Council Western MO & KS
State Farm Insurance Companies
State Capitol Area Fire Fighters Association
Stormont-Vail Regional Medical Center
United School Administrators of Kansas
Via Christi - St. Francis Burn Center
Via Christi - Trauma Center
Wesley Medical Center

*Membership also includes Local Coalitions and Chapters located in Allen, Anderson, Atchison, Clay, Coffey, Dickinson, Doniphan, Douglas, Ellis, Finney, Ford, Franklin, Geary, Jackson, Jefferson, Johnson, Leavenworth, Marion, McPherson, Meade, Mitchell, Montgomery, Nemaha, Osage, Pottawatomie, Republic, Rice, Riley, Saline, Shawnee, Smith, Wabaunsee, Wilson and Woodson Counties; as well as the cities of Chanute, Emporia, Leavenworth, Norton, Pittsburg, Wichita Area, and Metro Kansas City.

Safe Kids Kansas is a member of Safe Kids Worldwide, a global network of organizations whose mission is to prevent accidental childhood injury.

1/07

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www.safekids.org www.kansassafekids.org

PUBLIC POLICY STATEMENT

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Re: SB 294; Drivers License Age Restrictions.

February 15, 2007
Topeka, Kansas

Written Testimony Provided by:
Terry D. Holdren
KFB Governmental Relations

Chairman Donovan and members of the Senate Committee on Transportation, thank you for the opportunity to discuss the potential impacts of SB 294 on farmers, ranchers, small businesses, and communities across the state. As you know KFB is the state's largest general farm organization representing more than 40,000 farm and ranch families through our 105 county Farm Bureau Associations.

Over the interim KFB had the opportunity to participate in the Driving Force discussions concerning the need for reform of our drivers licensing structure and on the safety implications of the proposed changes. We also had the opportunity to discuss and agree with the task force on the current structure of the farm permit. Additionally, our membership had the opportunity to consider these issues in their annual policy discussions.

KFB supports SB 294 as a rational approach to teen driving in Kansas. The bill has addressed a number of concerns held by our organization regarding the ability of 14 year olds to obtain a Farm Permit.

KFB policy developed and adopted after input and discussion in all 105 counties of the state, supports the proposal before you today. Our membership agrees and empathizes with the general safety applications contained in the proposal but still maintains that the farm permit is an essential component in any proposal.

Thank you.

*Kansas Farm Bureau represents grass roots agriculture. Establishing a
non-profit advocacy organization supports farm families who earn
changing industry.*

Senate Transportation Committee
2-15-07
Attachment 15