

Dear Senator or Representative \_\_\_\_\_,

I am writing to ask for your support on a bill that will be coming before you in the very near future. It is a bill that contains several components that will greatly strengthen Indiana's current Graduated Driver's Licensing (GDL) law which pertains to new teen drivers.

As you may already know, traffic crashes are the number one killer of our teens – killing more 16-year-olds than any other age group. Teen drivers make up just over 6% of our state's licensed drivers; however, they are involved in over 15% of all our fatal crashes and over 20% of all our single vehicle fatal crashes. Our state continues to lose teens at an alarming rate, and I am asking for your help to reduce these needless deaths and injuries.

The way our law currently stands, a new teen driver can start driving completely on their own with absolutely no practice at all. We would never consider throwing our child in a lake with little or no practice at swimming. We require our athletes to practice daily to help strengthen their skills. And, we require our children to practice their musical instruments several times a week to assure they are getting better and better. Yet, too many parents are allowing their children to do the one thing most likely to take their life with little or no practice at all. Does this make sense?

This bill would require a 6 month holding period on Learner's Permits to allow more time for practice driving, and it would require parents or another adult to log driving hours with their child. Practice is imperative in helping these new drivers gain necessary skills.

As a new driver is gaining experience, it is critical they be free of as many distractions as possible. This bill asks for a restriction on cell phones and other handheld devices as well as limiting the number of passengers. When you consider that one teen passenger in the vehicle doubles their crash risk, and two or more passengers increase the crash risk by five times, passenger restrictions are one of the most important components to include during at least the first 6 months of driving.

There are nighttime driving restrictions in this bill as well; however, there are exemptions during the probationary stage that allows the teen to drive at night if it is related to school or church-related activities or work. This too is critical, considering that nighttime driving is the most dangerous for our teens.

Studies show that these components, when written into law, decrease deaths among 16-year-old drivers by 38% and injuries by 40%. We cannot continue to sit back and ignore this problem. Unfortunately, too many parents will only go as far as what is required by law because they rely on the law to know what is best.

Please support this bill and help save young Hoosier lives on our roadways.

Sincerely,

Your Name  
Address  
Phone Number