

Testimony of:

Richard J. Hornfeck, Ph.D.
Director
Highway Safety Center
Indiana University of Pennsylvania
Indiana, PA 15705-1087
(724) 357-4050
(724) 357-7595 (FAX)
1-800-896-7703
E-mail: rhornf@grove.iup.edu

To:

House Transportation Committee
April 7, 1998

Representative Vance, Mr. Chairman and members of the House Transportation Committee, I want to thank you for allowing me to present information concerning Graduated Driver Licensing for Pennsylvania.

Indiana University of Pennsylvania's Highway Safety Center in cooperation with the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation has developed, implemented, and evaluated an Enhanced Driver Education Curriculum for Pennsylvania High School Students. This project started with the 1993 school year and continued through the 1995 school year. The information presented today is taken from the project evaluation. The data that I have selected to present to the committee represents twenty-four high school driver education programs, approximately 1,800 students, and 1,800 parents. The information was taken from surveys given to the students and parents and it will demonstrate the need for a comprehensive graduated driver licensing program in Pennsylvania.

- **Do young drivers need longer time on a learner's permit before being licensed?**

The answer to this is **YES**, and this is supported with the following data:

1. Approximately 26% of our young drivers received their license within one month of receiving their permit. Another 26% received their license within two months and 25% within three months. Only 23% received their license after three months.
2. Approximately 76% of our young drivers passed their driving test on their first attempt and 20% succeeded on their second try.
3. Approximately 8% of our young drivers had their first collision within two months of licensing, another 5% within four months, and another 6% within six months of licensing. After the first six months, the percentage of

drivers experiencing their first collision was between two and three percent for the next six months.

4. Approximately 29% of our young drivers indicated that they had one or more collisions within their first six-months of acquiring their license.
 5. Approximately 61% of our young drivers indicated that they were at fault in relation to their crash, and the predominate driving errors were: Misjudging Space, Speed Too Fast For Conditions, and Did Not See Other User.
 6. Approximately 23% of the parents indicated that young drivers should be required to have four or more months on a learner's permit, while 33% said three months and 30% indicated two months. There were 14% who indicated one month.
- **Do parents/guardians need to provide a designated amount of supervised practice time for the new driver?**

The answer to this is **YES**, and this is supported with the following data:

1. Approximately 16% of the parents provided six or fewer hours of practice driving to their new drivers, another 34% provided between seven and eighteen hours, 26% provided between nineteen and thirty hours, and 25% provided in excess of thirty hours.
2. The number of collisions that were experienced in the first six months of driving and the driver error that resulted in the collision is previously identified.

- **Do young drivers need greater control after receiving their driver's license?**

The answer to this is **YES**, and this is supported with the following data to demonstrate why they are at greater risk:

1. Approximately 52% of our young drivers indicated that they drive their **own** vehicle.

2. Approximately 62% of our young drivers drive almost **daily** to and from school.
3. Approximately 52% of our young drivers indicated that they do the majority of their driving with friends, 39% indicated alone, and only 4% indicated with parents.
4. Approximately 14% of our young drivers indicated that they had been cited for a moving violation in their first six months of licensing.
5. Approximately 89% of our young drivers indicated that they wore their safety belt as a driver, 81% wore them as front seat passengers, and only 50% as back seat passengers.

- **Do young drivers need formal driver education?**

The answer to this is **YES**, and this is supported with the following data:

1. During 1995, the sixteen and seventeen year old drivers were involved in 14,068 reported collisions in Pennsylvania. This is a rate of 11.69 crashes for every 100 licensed 16 and 17 year old driver.
2. During 1995, the sixteen and seventeen year old drivers in the evaluation were involved in 61 collisions reported to DOT. This is a collision rate of 7.03 crashes for every 100 licensed 16 and 17 year old drivers that participated in the study. This represents 4.5 fewer collisions than the state's 11.69 collision rate.