

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

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House Bill 10

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House Transportation Committee

Main Capitol Building  
Room 140  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Tuesday, March 9, 1999 - 9:07 a.m.

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BEFORE:

Honorable Richard Geist, Majority Chairperson  
Honorable Ellen Bard  
Honorable Russell Fairchild  
Honorable Dick Hess  
Honorable Dennis Leh  
Honorable Ronald Marsico  
Honorable John Pippy  
Honorable Joseph Battisto, Minority Chairperson  
Honorable Frank Gigliotti  
Honorable Susan Laughlin  
Honorable David Levdansky  
Honorable Anthony Melio  
Honorable Joseph Preston  
Honorable Dante Santoni

ALSO PRESENT:

Dana Alwine, Esquire  
Office of Majority Chief Counsel

Eric C. Bugaile  
Majority Research Analyst

Theresa Jones  
Majority Secretary

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1 CHAIRPERSON GEIST: Good morning, everyone.  
2 Now that we have the microphones fixed, I think we'll get  
3 started. I'm State Representative Rick Geist. And this is  
4 the second day of the hearing we're going to continue on.  
5 Before we do that, I'm going to ask Theresa to call the  
6 roll. Not the roll for this, but the roll that will count  
7 for our vote when we reconvene after the end of the  
8 hearing.

9 And I think that way, we have some members who  
10 are coming and going and some who have given me their  
11 proxies already. But I'd like to do a roll now, please.

12 MS. JONES: Chairman Geist?

13 CHAIRPERSON GEIST: Here.

14 MS. JONES: Representative Argall?  
15 Representative Bard?

16 REPRESENTATIVE BARD: Here.

17 MS. JONES: Druce? Fairchild?

18 REPRESENTATIVE FAIRCHILD: Here.

19 MS. JONES: Forcier? Hess?

20 REPRESENTATIVE HESS: Here.

21 MS. JONES: Leh? Maher? Marsico?

22 REPRESENTATIVE MARSICO: Here.

23 MS. JONES: Pippy?

24 REPRESENTATIVE PIPPY: Present.

25 MS. JONES: Platts? Smith? Stairs?

1 Strittmatter? Chairman Battisto? Representative Daley?  
2 Gigliotti?

3 REPRESENTATIVE GIGLIOTTI: Here.

4 MS. JONES: Laughlin? Levdansky? Markosek?  
5 Melio?

6 REPRESENTATIVE MELIO: Here.

7 MS. JONES: Petrarca? Preston?

8 REPRESENTATIVE PRESTON: Here.

9 MS. JONES: Roberts?

10 REPRESENTATIVE ROBERTS: Here.

11 MS. JONES: And Santoni?

12 CHAIRPERSON GEIST: Okay. That will be the  
13 roll call for the meeting. Yesterday's roll call plus  
14 additions for today will count for yesterday. Stairs is  
15 here and should be -- he gave me his proxy. We're  
16 anxiously awaiting Joe Battisto's arrival, but we'll start  
17 without him so that we can stay on schedule.

18 Yesterday we heard some wonderful testimony,  
19 and I'm sure this morning we're going to hear much more.  
20 We had some wonderful testimony from a young fellow who  
21 came from Pittsburgh, right next door to Representative  
22 Pippy's district. And this morning we're going to hear the  
23 same.

24 And we're going to have -- our first presenter  
25 is Jarrett -- is it Coger? He's a high school student.

1 And LaShira Horton, a high school student, and Urmika  
2 Chatterjee. Is that pretty close? You want to go over to  
3 the table. We'd love to have you. When you folks are  
4 going to testify, you'll have to share the microphone. Is  
5 that okay?

6                   MISS HORTON: Good morning. My name is LaShira  
7 Horton, and I am a student at -- and I am a sophomore at  
8 Furness High School in Philadelphia. I am here today with  
9 eight other students also from the Philadelphia area,  
10 including Urmika Chatterjee and Jarrett Coger who are  
11 sitting beside me.

12                   We are all members of the Nationwide Insurance  
13 Highway Safety Advocacy Project. We have been going to  
14 meetings almost every week on legislative advocacy and  
15 highway safety issues since October of 1998. These  
16 meetings have been led by -- by the Temple LEAP and Street  
17 Law.

18                   We have volunteered to be part of this project  
19 so that we will learn about how our legislative process  
20 works and how to become active and involved citizens. One  
21 of the highlights of this project was our first trip to  
22 Harrisburg last month when we met with Representatives  
23 Myers and Youngblood and also Senator Schwartz's aide.

24                   Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, we  
25 are very excited to be testifying here before you today and

1 thank you for this wonderful opportunity. We would be  
2 happy to answer any questions at the end of our testimony.  
3 We have shortened our remarks for the purpose of conserving  
4 time, but ask if our entire written testimony could be  
5 submitted for the record.

6 We would like to talk about the dire need to  
7 stop the deaths and injuries of our peers on Pennsylvania's  
8 roads. Throughout our country, motor vehicle crashes are  
9 the leading cause of death for young people 15 to 20 years  
10 of age, causing approximately one-third of all fatalities  
11 in this age group.

12 In Pennsylvania, in 1997, forty-seven 16- and  
13 17-year-old drivers died tragically on our roads and nearly  
14 6,000 more were injured. Additionally, people of all ages  
15 are affected by the mistakes of young drivers. In 1997, 88  
16 people were killed in crashes involving 16- or 17-year-old  
17 drivers.

18 Furthermore, fatalities and crashes involving  
19 young drivers are increasing and are disproportionate to  
20 those of all drivers and age groups. In fact, one of seven  
21 16-year-old male drivers had a reportable crash before his  
22 17th birthday.

23 We cannot wait any longer to address the  
24 deaths and injuries of our friends and families occurring  
25 on our roads. The high number of deaths and injuries

1 caused by young drivers has been attributed to the lack of  
2 driving experience and greater risk exposure coupled by  
3 risk-taking behavior and immaturity.

4           Just to be clear, when we speak of immaturity,  
5 we are not saying that we are not responsible young adults  
6 capable of handling many of life's challenges. But we can  
7 say that generally teenagers are involved in more higher  
8 risk activities than older people. This outlook combined  
9 with inexperience behind the wheel can be a lethal  
10 combination.

11           MISS CHATTERJEE: After working with the  
12 Nationwide Insurance Project, we have learned that  
13 improving the current graduated driver licensing system and  
14 getting young people to wear their safety belts would curb  
15 the number of teenage deaths and injuries.

16           To accomplish that goal, four major parts of  
17 the current graduated driver licensing system need to be  
18 improved in Pennsylvania. They are: Increasing the  
19 supervised driving time, nighttime driving restrictions,  
20 conviction-free requirement, and mandatory safety belt  
21 usage.

22           Right now House Bill 10 addresses the first  
23 three of these four components but does not mandate that  
24 teenage drivers and passengers wear their safety belts.

25           Supervised driving time. Currently, there is



1 only a 30-day waiting period to hold a learner's permit  
2 before taking a road test and no minimum adult supervised  
3 behind-the-wheel training. It is only required that  
4 another driver who is at least 18 years of age be in the  
5 car with the permitted driver.

6 In reality, this means that a 16-year-old can  
7 get her permit and be driving with her 18-year-old  
8 boyfriend in the car without her having any supervised  
9 behind-the-wheel training. Increasing the waiting period  
10 to 6 months and the age of the accompanying driver to 21  
11 years old as well as mandating 50 hours of behind-the-wheel  
12 training, as House Bill 10 provides, will address this  
13 dangerous scenario.

14 These improvements will increase the time for  
15 essential behind-the-wheel skill building as increasing the  
16 experience level of the supervising adult.

17 Nighttime driving restrictions. The current  
18 system for junior licenses restricts nighttime driving from  
19 midnight to 5:00 a.m. Considering that a large majority of  
20 crashes with novice drivers happens between 3:00 p.m. and  
21 midnight, reducing the time teens can be on the road  
22 without supervision will limit their exposure to dangerous  
23 nighttime driving.

24 While night driving restrictions reduce  
25 crashes during the restricted time, those restrictions

1 beginning earlier reduce a greater number of crashes  
2 because more drivers are effective. We support the  
3 provision in House Bill 10 which would extend the  
4 restriction for an additional hour beginning at 11:00 p.m.

5 We also agree with the provision which  
6 provides for limited exceptions to this restriction.  
7 Participating in volunteer work, such as being a volunteer  
8 fire fighter or holding a job, are activities which  
9 demonstrate a certain level of responsibility.

10 The goal of nighttime restrictions is not to  
11 deny essential driving at night but is, rather, to limit  
12 high risk recreational driving. The teenagers who either  
13 chose to be involved with volunteering or who have a job  
14 should be given the privilege of driving to get to these  
15 activities.

16 Conviction-free requirement. Right now if a  
17 young driver is convicted of a high speed violation or  
18 multiple other traffic violations, the system only provides  
19 for discretionary sanctioning as determined by PennDOT.  
20 The lack of a specific and strong punishment for young  
21 drivers who display a lack of respect for the  
22 responsibilities of having a junior license tells these  
23 drivers that their behavior is acceptable.

24 As long as Pennsylvania allows teen drivers to  
25 speed and disobey traffic laws consequence-free, some teens

1 will do it. We support the provision in the bill which  
2 establishes accountability for dangerous behavior,  
3 mandating a 90-day suspension for a first offense and 120  
4 days for every subsequent offense.

5 MR. COGER: Safety belts. Pennsylvania  
6 current -- Pennsylvania's current law stipulates that  
7 children three years of age and younger must be properly  
8 buckled up and if they are not, a police officer can pull  
9 over the driver and give him a ticket.

10 However, if a driver is not belted, an officer  
11 can't pull him over unless he has broken another law.  
12 These laws seem to contradict each other in terms of the  
13 role the government plays to protect its citizens. The  
14 government seems to value the life of a baby more than a  
15 5-year-old or a 16-year-old or the parent of that baby.

16 It does not make sense to us that there is a  
17 device in our cars that saved an estimated 9,500 lives each  
18 year across the nation but the law does not allow an  
19 officer to give a ticket to an unbelted driver. Drivers  
20 can get tickets if they run red lights, if they speed and  
21 for violating every other traffic law but not for failure  
22 to wear a safety belt.

23 We urge you to consider amending House Bill 10  
24 to include a provision which will protect young drivers.  
25 In Pennsylvania, approximately 70 percent of teenagers

1 killed on the highways were not wearing their safety belts.  
2 Not only is enacting a standard enforcement law one of the  
3 most effective ways we get more people to buckle up, it  
4 also increases the number of children who are protected by  
5 occupant restraints.

6           Adult safety belt use is the best predictor of  
7 child restraint use. And teenage drivers would be those  
8 adult drivers who have children sitting in the back seat  
9 within a few years. Additionally, per miles traveled,  
10 black and Hispanic male teenagers are nearly twice as  
11 likely to die in a motor vehicle crash as white male teens.

12           While black men are less likely to buckle up  
13 than their white and Hispanic counterparts, research shows  
14 that for black men age 18 to 29, belt use is significantly  
15 higher in the standard enforcement states than in the  
16 secondary law states.

17           According to a 1997 PennDOT crash booklet, if  
18 everyone buckled up, 489 lives could be saved every year  
19 and thousands of injuries prevented. Furthermore, over 2.7  
20 billion in economic loss could be saved each year. Since  
21 most of the graduated driver licensing systems are  
22 relatively new, the extent to which they will prevent  
23 deaths and injuries cannot yet be fully measured.

24           However, the systems enacted so far  
25 demonstrated major steps towards expanding the learning

1 process, reducing risk exposure and improving driving  
2 proficiency. Systems which include proponents such as  
3 supervised driving time, nighttime driving restrictions,  
4 conviction-free requirements, and strong safety belt  
5 provisions allow young drivers to learn in increments and  
6 build up on their experience.

7           Although these restrictions will restrict our  
8 ability to get around and may inconvenience both us and our  
9 parents, these restrictions have been demonstrated to save  
10 lives. We urge you to enact House Bill No. 10 and to  
11 improve Pennsylvania's safety belt law. Thank you.

12           CHAIRPERSON GEIST: Thank you very much. I  
13 just want to say something before we open up for questions  
14 after he turns my mike on for me. You guys were wonderful.  
15 Do you realize that you've gone farther than we ever have  
16 in this law because we didn't think we could go that far.

17           Now, just one quick question. Are you guys  
18 working for Betty Serian at the Department?

19           MS. SERIAN: Well briefed.

20           CHAIRPERSON GEIST: I have two questions when  
21 I read through the testimony that jumped out at me that is  
22 something I really -- I've never considered before. When  
23 you talk about the number of crashes in the urban area that  
24 minorities have compared to the regular driving public, if  
25 we were to change the curriculum from driver's ed. to

1 flip-flop it, as has been suggested by other people  
2 testifying, that would require 30 -- 30 years. Yeah. -- 30  
3 hours of behind-the-wheel training and 6 to 10 hours in the  
4 classroom, would you think that a special curriculum for  
5 urban driving skills would be in order?

6 MISS HORTON: Yes.

7 MR. COGER: Well, there has been no, like,  
8 proven facts about driver's ed. so we will not carry a  
9 position on driver's ed. There is nothing, like, that  
10 proves that driver's ed. has helped out crash -- has  
11 prevented less crashes or anything like that.

12 CHAIRPERSON GEIST: That's correct. But we've  
13 never seen driver's ed. as has -- as it has now been  
14 recommended by different people. And I talked with  
15 Representative Stairs after yesterday's testimony. And I  
16 know that as Chairman of the Education Committee, our two  
17 committees will be doing something about this after this  
18 bill is passed.

19 So we would appreciate it if you want to give  
20 us some more input to come back, that would be fine. The  
21 other thing is, I think your parents and people that came  
22 up with you should be really proud of you. You guys --  
23 none of you have mike fright. You did a tremendous job.

24 And this is going all over the state. So  
25 congratulations. We're glad to have you. Questions?

1 Fairchild, Representative.

2           REPRESENTATIVE FAIRCHILD: Thank you, Mr.  
3 Chairman. I also concur and commend you. I think you've  
4 just done an excellent job of laying out the key portion of  
5 the bill. My one question is, I've had some feedback from  
6 students in my area. And they were a little concerned  
7 about the 50 hours of supervised driving.

8           Do you see that as any type of problem of  
9 being able to get that 50 hours in of supervised driving?

10           MISS CHATTERJEE: I think that the more  
11 experience one gets, the better driver that person can be.  
12 So I think that for 50 hours, that's a lot more experience  
13 that these people will be getting on the roads. And  
14 therefore, when they are -- when they do have their full  
15 license, they might be able to handle different situations  
16 differently rather than if they had only had 30 hours of  
17 experience or none.

18           REPRESENTATIVE FAIRCHILD: Do you think that  
19 there's -- I guess there's no nice way to say this. But  
20 there are people that have a lot of cars in their families  
21 and a lot of money that could do it. What about a parent  
22 that -- a single parent or parent that may not have a  
23 vehicle at all that may use mass transit?

24           If you are a son or daughter, what kind of  
25 opportunities will you have to get that -- those 50 hours

1 in?

2                   MISS CHATTERJEE: Well, you could always go to  
3 maybe an uncle or an aunt or a relative might have a car.  
4 Or maybe there would be some other way for them to get to a  
5 vehicle. But I strongly believe that the more experience  
6 one has, the better a driver that they can be and they  
7 could prevent much more deaths and crashes.

8                   REPRESENTATIVE FAIRCHILD: Thank you very  
9 much.

10                   CHAIRPERSON GEIST: Representative Marsico.

11                   REPRESENTATIVE MARSICO: Thank you, Mr.  
12 Chairman. Again, I agree that you've given expert  
13 testimony. I wanted to get your opinion about something  
14 that's been thrown out there from last year or so by  
15 experts. And we keep hearing from the experts that the  
16 problems for the high rate of crashes among teenagers is  
17 immaturity.

18                   That's one of the problems besides  
19 inexperience and besides lack of driver education and  
20 training, et cetera. What is your view -- what are your  
21 views with regard to maybe raising the -- the eligibility  
22 from age -- from 16 to 17?

23                   MR. COGER: Well, immaturity is always a  
24 factor. It's -- I don't think -- I don't believe that  
25 changing the driver's age from 16 to 17 will really -- will



1 really change that much because a lot of people aren't  
2 getting their license till they're around 17 years old.

3           And experience weighs more than immaturity.  
4 If they just learn like, like, if we can learn the effects  
5 of, like, our actions of driving fast, learn the effects  
6 of, like, driving fast and how we can destroy our lives, we  
7 could just learn that -- that experience will -- I don't  
8 know. -- that experience just weighs more than immaturity.

9           REPRESENTATIVE MARSICO: All right. Thank  
10 you.

11           CHAIRPERSON GEIST: Thank you. Ellen Bard has  
12 a question. But before she does, I think that the three of  
13 you need to meet Mr. Glatfelter before you leave because I  
14 think that you guys have been in co -- in -- working  
15 together on your testimony.

16           But Art gave some presentations and has been  
17 talking about this and has written extensively about it.  
18 And you guys are right on the beam. Ellen Bard.

19           REPRESENTATIVE BARD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.  
20 I would just like to get your perspective on the aspect of  
21 how this act takes effect. And the way it's scheduled to  
22 go into effect would impact only on those who are in the --  
23 who get their permit after it's gone into effect, and it  
24 would not effect those who already have their permit.

25           Do you think that that's the way it should be

1 handled, or would you like to see it expanded to those who  
2 currently might have their permit?

3           MISS CHATTERJEE: I think it would be great to  
4 be able to expand it to those who currently also have their  
5 permit. I don't know if that's possible. But I think the  
6 more that we can reach drivers -- young drivers, the better  
7 -- the safer our roads can be, the more that they will  
8 understand the -- that driving is a serious thing.

9           It's not something to be taken lightly. That  
10 the more experience that they get -- I believe that the  
11 more experience that they get, they'll mature more; they'll  
12 be able to handle different situations better. And so I  
13 think that if currently the people who are getting -- in  
14 the process of getting their permits, if this could reach  
15 them also, I think it would make a big difference.

16           REPRESENTATIVE BARD: Thank you.

17           CHAIRPERSON GEIST: For the last question,  
18 Representative Melio.

19           REPRESENTATIVE MELIO: Yeah. Congratulations  
20 on your testimony. I just -- you have strong support for  
21 the bill. Do you have any criticisms or something that  
22 could make the bill stronger? Yesterday we heard from a  
23 student that thought that the 6 months should be reduced to  
24 60 days because of work problems, that they need the car  
25 for work and that 60 -- or 6-month period would create a

1 problem for someone who has a job. Do you see -- is that  
2 the way you feel?

3           MISS CHATTERJEE: I think that it depends on  
4 what job that they have. It depends how necessary it is.  
5 But I think they should be able to find a way to work  
6 around that because I think then if you give some people --  
7 if you tell some people that sure, we'll lessen it to 60  
8 days for you, then you will get a lot of other people who  
9 will bring in other situations that they also need to  
10 lessen the amount of days.

11           And I think that basically this program is for  
12 the benefit of everyone and that the more that people that  
13 this can affect, more people will understand. We will see  
14 probably a difference in the statistics that people are  
15 dying right now.

16           I think that anything we can do to stop those  
17 unnecessary deaths, that we should do that. So I think  
18 that they could probably find a way to work around that.

19           MR. COGER: Yeah. And I know from experience,  
20 like, I know a lot of people who have got their license  
21 because you know how it's, like, currently 30 days. Sixty  
22 days, that's not very much more than 30 days. That's only  
23 a month more.

24           People have gotten a license because, like,  
25 with the 50 hours, certification that you need 50 hours to

1 drive, that's proving a whole lot because I know a lot of  
2 people, they just sit there with their permit. They don't  
3 do any driving because the driver's test is fairly easy.

4           And then it's just like -- it's just driving  
5 around which is really easy and parallel parking which you  
6 can learn real quick. But with the 50 hours, you can't  
7 learn how to play basketball, be the best basketball player  
8 in two months. It takes a long -- it takes a long  
9 approach. It takes a long time.

10           Like, the longer that you -- the longer that  
11 you practice basketball, the better the basketball player  
12 you'll be. So the longer that you practice driving, the  
13 better driver you'll be. We can't have people driving  
14 around who have drove around for like maybe two hours  
15 because only setting a certain time limit, that doesn't  
16 mean that they're going to go drive for that time limit.

17           Saying a certain hour that you have to drive  
18 for sets the amount of time, lets the people know the  
19 amount of time that they have to practice driving. So 50  
20 hours would be -- certifying 50 hours would be the best  
21 thing.

22           CHAIRPERSON GEIST: I want to thank you all  
23 very much. When we set out to build this bill, the one  
24 thing that we wanted to have was responsible drivers who  
25 were well trained. And boy, you guys sure reinforced that

1 today. And I want to thank you.

2 Our next presenter will be Ted Leonard. And  
3 Ted, I don't know how you follow an act like this. But Ted  
4 has been deeply involved, as the AAA have, all over the  
5 country in trying to implement this program. And we're  
6 just pleased with the support that we've gotten from the  
7 AAA both in research and the push that they have given this  
8 legislation. So Ted, it's all yours.

9 MR. LEONARD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You're  
10 indeed correct. This is a very tough act to follow. I am  
11 Ted Leonard. I'm Executive Director of the Pennsylvania  
12 AAA Federation. We are very pleased and grateful for this  
13 opportunity today to appear before the Committee in support  
14 of House Bill 10.

15 We believe it is appropriate, timely and  
16 necessary for the General Assembly to enact a bill such as  
17 House Bill 10 to address the licensing process for novice  
18 drivers. As I'm sure that most of you are aware, each  
19 passing month gives this issue a new urgency.

20 Almost every legislative district has  
21 experienced a death or injury of a teen driver. One can  
22 hardly pick up a newspaper anymore without reading about  
23 another teen driver accident with fatalities or serious  
24 injuries.

25 This PennDOT chart -- PennDOT chart that you

1 have in front of you depicts the teen accidents, fatalities  
2 and injuries throughout the Commonwealth in 1997. But  
3 behind each of these symbols on the chart, the statistics  
4 is someone's son or daughter or brother or sister.

5           Many organizations like AAA have worked hard  
6 to prevent these tragedies by reducing crashes by novice  
7 drivers. What exactly is our young driver problem? Well,  
8 quite simply, teen drivers are vastly over-represented in  
9 automobile crashes.

10           Car crashes are the number one cause of death  
11 among 15- to 20-year-olds. No other form of injury or  
12 disease is as great a threat to our teens' safety.  
13 Nationwide on an annual basis, 6,300 teens are killed on  
14 America's roads. That's 17 a day, 120 a month -- 120 a  
15 week or 525 a month.

16           In Pennsylvania, teen drivers make up roughly  
17 4 percent of the driving population but account for about  
18 13 percent of the traffic fatalities. Forty-five percent  
19 of all 16- and 17-year-old girls that die do so as a result  
20 of an automobile accident.

21           Among boys of the same age, 36 percent of the  
22 deaths are due to crashes. Nationwide the crash rate for  
23 teens is four times higher than it is for adults. The  
24 reasons for this over-representation of teen drivers in  
25 crash data are many, but they can be summarized as follows:

1                   Number one, inexperience. Young drivers lack  
2 the skills to drive in all road conditions and environments  
3 such as inclement weather and nighttime driving. In many  
4 cases, it's possible to obtain a driver's license with very  
5 little behind-the-wheel experience. Young driver accidents  
6 typically involve single vehicle, run-off-the-road crashes,  
7 hitting fixed objects such as trees, embankments and other  
8 stopped cars.

9                   Number two, high risk behavior.  
10 Characteristics of young drivers include a feeling of  
11 invulnerability, immaturity and impulsiveness leading to  
12 poor driving judgment and participation in high risk  
13 behaviors such as speeding, traveling too fast for  
14 conditions.

15                   These behaviors are especially evident with an  
16 increase in the number of teen drivers who accompany -- a  
17 number of teen passengers who accompany a teen driver.  
18 Studies have shown that allowing passengers to ride with a  
19 16-year-old driver increases their chances of being  
20 involved in a fatal crash by 100 percent through peer  
21 distractions, peer pressure and encouragement to drive  
22 unsafely.

23                   A lack of seat belt use is also evident in  
24 teen crashes. The use of alcohol is also a significant  
25 factor. Twenty-one percent of teens involved in fatal

1 crashes had been drinking.

2           Third, high risk exposure. Young drivers  
3 drive during nighttime, high risk hours, again, often with  
4 young teen passengers. The risk of fatal crashes for  
5 teenagers is highest between 9:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m.  
6 Fifty-five percent of fatal teen crashes occur between 9:00  
7 p.m. and 6:00 a.m.

8           To address this nationwide problem of teen  
9 driving deaths, the American Automobile Association is  
10 advocating a program of graduated licensing. Graduated  
11 licensing is designed to ease beginning drivers into the  
12 driving environment by progressing or graduating through  
13 driver licensing stages before unrestricted licensing.

14           Mistakes are a part of any learning process,  
15 including driving. The issue is how to minimize the  
16 likelihood that crashes will occur while young people are  
17 learning to drive. Typically in a graduated license  
18 system, novice drivers progress through three stages: The  
19 learner's permit, the intermediate license, and the full  
20 license.

21           The key components include increased  
22 behind-the-wheel driving experience. House Bill 10  
23 accomplishes this by extending the learner's permit phase  
24 to 6 months and requiring permit parent/instructor  
25 certification of 50 hours of supervised training. We feel



1 that this is extremely important.

2 Nighttime driving restrictions. Again, House  
3 Bill 10 addresses this problem.

4 Teenage passenger restrictions. Two-thirds of  
5 all teenage passenger deaths occur in crashes in which  
6 another teen is driving. We recommend that teen passengers  
7 be restricted to at least the number of seat belts  
8 available in the vehicle.

9 Mandatory use of seat belts. Several states  
10 have passed a primary seat belt enforcement law and some  
11 have made seat belt enforcement as a part of their  
12 graduated driver license program.

13 Evaluations in three states show the benefits  
14 of graduated driver license programs. California reported  
15 a 5 percent reduction in crashes for 8 drivers age 15 to  
16 17. Maryland reported a 5 percent reduction in crashes and  
17 a 10 percent reduction in traffic convictions for drivers  
18 age 16 to 17. Oregon reported a 16 percent reduction in  
19 crashes for male drivers age 16 to 17.

20 Additionally, the states of Florida, Georgia,  
21 Illinois, Michigan, North Carolina and Ohio have recently  
22 implemented graduated driver licensing programs. In a  
23 recent survey of AAA members which we conducted last year,  
24 91 percent responded that they would favor a graduated  
25 licensing program for novice drivers which would require

1 more behind-the-wheel experience before full driving  
2 privileges are granted.

3 I thank the Committee for this opportunity to  
4 comment on these needed novice driver reforms. We are  
5 willing to work in any way with the Legislature to address  
6 the problem of teen driving. And I would be happy to  
7 answer any questions.

8 CHAIRPERSON GEIST: Thank you very much, Ted.  
9 I have one question. After listening to those kids, did we  
10 go far enough?

11 MR. LEONARD: Perhaps not. Perhaps not. I  
12 mean, you're certainly hearing it from the folks on whom  
13 this is going to have the greatest impact.

14 CHAIRPERSON GEIST: And then one other  
15 question. Do you feel now that we are putting  
16 responsibility into the law that what we want are  
17 responsible drivers?

18 MR. LEONARD: This goes further towards  
19 responsibility than what we have now certainly. And I  
20 think that everything we can do to educate young drivers,  
21 everything we can do to ensure that they have adequate  
22 experience before they get on the road behind the wheel of  
23 a 3,000 ton weapon, we're doing a great job.

24 CHAIRPERSON GEIST: Thank you. Representative  
25 Battisto. We're glad to have him up here with us now who

1 is the Democratic Chair of this Committee.

2 REPRESENTATIVE BATTISTO: Thank you very much.  
3 Ted, in your testimony, you talk about restricting the  
4 number of occupants in a vehicle to the number of seat  
5 belts. If you have four seat belts, four in a car; if you  
6 have a van with six seat belts, it would be six, right? Is  
7 that what you're saying?

8 MR. LEONARD: That's correct.

9 REPRESENTATIVE BATTISTO: Are you implying any  
10 way that those under 18-year-olds should be -- and  
11 naturally you want them all to have seat belts. But you're  
12 not implying that we should change anything to mandate that  
13 under 18-year-olds should have seats belts?

14 MR. LEONARD: No, no. Part of that is  
15 certainly that they should be wearing their seat belts.  
16 That is a part of our program, our recommendation for  
17 graduated driver license. Our studies have shown that the  
18 more teens you pile into a car, the greater the percentage  
19 is that they're going to have an accident through  
20 distractions and so forth.

21 Also, a part of our program is that at a  
22 minimum, the number of passengers should be limited to the  
23 number of seat belts and they should be wearing those seat  
24 belts.

25 REPRESENTATIVE BATTISTO: The idea of primary

1 enforcement is sort of a controversial thing so you don't  
2 want to muddy this bill up with that, do you?

3 MR. LEONARD: I didn't want to say those  
4 words. But certainly that's the idea, yes.

5 REPRESENTATIVE BATTISTO: Okay. Thank you  
6 very much. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

7 CHAIRPERSON GEIST: Representative Leh.

8 REPRESENTATIVE LEH: Yes. Thank you, Mr.  
9 Chairman. Mr. Leonard, thank you also. My question is,  
10 you cited in your testimony on page 2 high risk exposure,  
11 driving between the hours of 9:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. in the  
12 morning. I think we all realize that. I guess -- and I  
13 think somebody advocated this yesterday.

14 And maybe the Chairman can jog my memory. I'm  
15 not sure. But how would your association feel about  
16 requiring part of those 50 hours to be nighttime driving to  
17 give young people experience during dark hours because it's  
18 a totally different experience out there when you're  
19 driving at nighttime?

20 MR. LEONARD: Absolutely.

21 REPRESENTATIVE LEH: I don't know how we would  
22 do that to make sure that it could be documented but --

23 CHAIRPERSON GEIST: It's going to be done.

24 MR. LEONARD: AAA had created a logbook in  
25 which we had recommended that a portion of the hours be

1 given to nighttime driving, a portion be given to inclement  
2 weather, and even given some of the problems we've had, for  
3 example, with work zone safety.

4           Perhaps a parent should take a teen driver out  
5 and drive through a work zone where construction is going  
6 on and teach them that, look, just slow down in work zones.  
7 And so that 50 hours needn't be straight daylight, freeway,  
8 traffic driving; but it should be under varying conditions.

9           REPRESENTATIVE LEH: I know. I only asked  
10 that -- and it was a while ago when I got my permit to  
11 drive. And I remember -- I don't recall my parents ever  
12 taking me out at nighttime. And all of a sudden, I got  
13 behind the wheel of a car. I had my license.

14           And all of a sudden, it was dark out. And the  
15 lights didn't cover near what the daylight sun did.

16           MR. LEONARD: Yes, you're absolutely correct.

17           REPRESENTATIVE LEH: So it is a different  
18 experience.

19           MR. LEONARD: Nighttime is a very different  
20 environment, as is inclement weather.

21           REPRESENTATIVE LEH: Okay. Thank you, Mr.  
22 Chairman.

23           CHAIRPERSON GEIST: Representative Leh has  
24 been in the dark for a lot of years. Representative Bard.

25           REPRESENTATIVE BARD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

1 I would like to compliment the AAA organization for its  
2 leadership role across the country and trying to promote  
3 graduated licensing. I think it's very helpful and very  
4 worthwhile.

5 My question has to do with your position on  
6 education and how worthwhile you feel education is and  
7 mandates and incentives, that sort of thing, if you have  
8 any information to share with us.

9 MR. LEONARD: We -- as an organization, we  
10 stand behind driver education. And in fact, AAA National  
11 is at the moment working on modifying and changing its  
12 driver's education curriculum. And I understand it's not a  
13 part of this bill.

14 We do strongly support driver education. And  
15 hopefully, that will be taken up in another form and at a  
16 later date. The thing about driver education is that it  
17 doesn't always stick well. Sometimes students are given  
18 driver education in a classroom in their junior year and  
19 they don't start driving until their senior year. So a lot  
20 of that training has gone away.

21 The curriculum we're looking at, as the  
22 Chairman mentioned, was flip-flopping the on-the-road  
23 experience with classroom experience; in other words, 30  
24 hours behind the wheel and 6 hours or so in the classroom,  
25 and also looking at giving driver's education in segments.

1           For example, one portion of driver education  
2 during the learner permit phase; a second portion of driver  
3 education once the teen drivers have some experience on the  
4 road. An interesting fact is that in surveys of seat belt  
5 usage, seat belt usage is highest among teen drivers who  
6 have been through driver education.

7           REPRESENTATIVE BARD: Thank you.

8           CHAIRPERSON GEIST: Tony Melio.

9           REPRESENTATIVE MELIO: Ted, you brought up  
10 some interesting points, especially the one seat belt for  
11 every driver. I don't think, trying to find out and  
12 inquiring with some of the people here, that we have any  
13 laws of overloading vehicles, not just for teenagers but  
14 for the whole population. So that if -- if there's only  
15 four seat belts in a car and you had 5 people, then that  
16 would be a violation, right?

17          MR. LEONARD: If you had a primary seat belt  
18 enforcement, yes. And overloading a vehicle is certainly a  
19 problem for older experienced drivers but becomes even more  
20 so for the teen driver.

21          REPRESENTATIVE MELIO: So then this is  
22 something we should address in this bill, or should that be  
23 a different bill?

24          MR. LEONARD: I think limiting the number of  
25 teen passengers and seat belt usage is something that needs

1 to be addressed.

2 REPRESENTATIVE MELIO: Thank you, Mr.  
3 Chairman.

4 CHAIRPERSON GEIST: Thank you very much, Ted.  
5 Our next presenter will be Richard Hornfeck, retired  
6 director, Indiana University Institute for Highway Safety;  
7 and Ron Strapel, Executive Secretary, Pennsylvania  
8 Association for Safety Education. And if you fellows could  
9 not read your testimony, we would certainly appreciate it.

10 MR. HORNFECK: That's fine. Okay. Mr.  
11 Chairman --

12 CHAIRPERSON GEIST: You've done this fire  
13 drill many times.

14 MR. HORNFECK: Okay. -- and members of the  
15 House Transportation Committee, I want to thank you for  
16 allowing me to be here this morning. Some of the  
17 information I had an opportunity to give to you at the  
18 hearing that you had in Carlisle at the Cumberland Valley  
19 High School.

20 And the information was primarily taken --  
21 well, in fact, all the information that I've given you this  
22 morning was taken from the curriculum project that the  
23 University had an opportunity to start in 1993. And this  
24 was a project in which I served as project director at the  
25 University at the Highway Safety Center with the support of



1 the Departments of Education and Transportation.

2           And this project was a project that was  
3 started well before 1993. It was a project of Ketron  
4 (Phonetic), a research outfit out of Philadelphia. The  
5 name of the project was Pennsylvania's Enhanced Driver  
6 Education Curriculum Project. And our primary goal was to  
7 attempt, at the recommendations of Ketron, to put into a  
8 curriculum, the state-approved curriculum, certain areas to  
9 reduce the risk of the young driver.

10           And those four areas that were implemented or  
11 started or put together to put into this curriculum was a  
12 component on decision-making, there was a component on  
13 visual training, there was a component on night driving,  
14 and there was a component on parent participation.

15           The project was started in the school  
16 districts in the school year of '93/'94. The data that I'm  
17 using this morning that I've used in the report was  
18 collected over a 3-year period. It represents 24 high  
19 schools. Approximately 12 high schools were representing  
20 our treatment group and 12 high schools were representing  
21 our control group.

22           The data was taken from approximately 1,800  
23 student surveys and 1,800 parent surveys. That's a  
24 combination of both groups, treatment and control. The  
25 surveys were self-reporting surveys. They were given to

1 the students.

2           There were two surveys that were given to the  
3 students. The one survey was given to the students in both  
4 groups as soon as they completed both phases of driver  
5 education, the classroom and the in-car instruction. The  
6 parent at that time also received a survey from both  
7 groups.

8           The second survey that was given to the  
9 students was a self-reporting survey. And we asked the  
10 teachers to put a clock on the students once they completed  
11 their program within a 6 months -- 6-month period to fill  
12 out a self-reporting survey.

13           And it was a rather in-depth survey in which  
14 we gathered a lot of information because we wanted to check  
15 to see if our groups as far as exposure, our treatment  
16 groups and our control groups, were all fairly similar so  
17 that we would get a pretty good feel for the random  
18 sampling that we had set up with our students.

19           The data analysis showed us several things.  
20 Number one, I heard Mr. Leonard mention about safety belt  
21 or seat belt usage. Safety belt usage for the students in  
22 the treatment group was significantly higher for our  
23 treatment students versus our control students.

24           There was probably, I think, about an 8 to 9  
25 percent difference. And we're talking as drivers. We

1 asked the students do they use their safety belt as a  
2 driver, and there was approximately an 8 to 9 percent  
3 difference between the two groups.

4 Our treatment group was in the 90-plus  
5 percent. Our control group was reflective of 80-plus  
6 percent. To support the idea that we need some type of  
7 mandatory seat belt usage for the young driver and their  
8 passengers was demonstrated with the surveys because when  
9 the students moved from the driver side to the front seat  
10 passenger side, we had a significant drop in usage of  
11 safety belts.

12 For what reason? They're not driving, perhaps  
13 they feel that they don't need them at that point. It was  
14 approximately a 10 percent drop for both groups. When they  
15 moved from the front seat to the back seat, it was a very  
16 significant drop.

17 So when they were riding in the back seat as  
18 passengers, more often than not, approximately half of the  
19 students would be using their safety belts, they indicated  
20 that they wore their safety belts. Our Department of  
21 Transportation data shows that the teens that died in motor  
22 vehicle crashes in '95, 46 percent of them were passengers;  
23 in '96, 48 percent; and in '97, 48 percent.

24 So approximately half of the teenagers that  
25 are dying in motor vehicle crashes are dying as passengers

1 in the motor vehicles, not as drivers. And this -- the  
2 information also shows that the majority of them were not  
3 wearing safety belts at the time of the crash.

4 We did not have a significant difference  
5 between the two groups in relation to moving violations.  
6 There was a 2 percent difference, but that is not  
7 statistically significant. The most frequent moving  
8 violation for both groups was speeding significantly, very  
9 high, followed by traffic light or stop sign violation, and  
10 then failing to yield. And then the rest of the moving  
11 violations were relatively low.

12 In examining the data, I do not feel that the  
13 state should wait until a young driver, either on -- on a  
14 restricted license gets to 6 points because we find in our  
15 report from the students that filled out the self-reporting  
16 survey, approximately 6 percent of both groups indicated  
17 that they had accrued 3 or more points.

18 Keep in mind that is less -- a minimum of 6  
19 months after getting their driver's license and less than  
20 12 months. So it was somewhere between the 6- and 12-month  
21 period. That supports the recommendation that I've made,  
22 is that the young driver would have their license suspended  
23 with fewer points than 6 as is currently in the bill. And  
24 there would also be some type of remedial training for the  
25 youthful offender before being re-licensed.

1           The young students from -- the students from  
2 Philadelphia indicated the question about attitude and  
3 perception and so forth. There are a certain group that do  
4 need, let's say, greater counseling and so forth as it  
5 relates to their responsibilities as a driver.

6           Something that we asked the students in the  
7 self-reporting survey, Have you had a collision? And we  
8 weren't concerned just about reported collisions. We were  
9 asking them any type of collision, whether it was reported  
10 or not reported.

11           There are significant more collisions that  
12 aren't reported to the Department of Transportation. Our  
13 treatment group had a 4.4 percent difference, fewer  
14 collisions than our control group. It was significant, the  
15 difference.

16           The greatest risk for both groups occurred  
17 within the first two months of licensure. Eight percent of  
18 the individuals after getting their license within 2 months  
19 had a collision. This rate -- this high rate continued  
20 between the 3rd and 4th month, and it also continued  
21 through the 5th and 6th month.

22           After the 6th month on the driver's license,  
23 the percentage of crashes dropped significantly for the  
24 group. Now, these were all crashes, just not reported  
25 crashes to the Department. Predominant driving errors

1 identified by the erring drivers were misjudging space,  
2 speed too fast for conditions and not seeing the other  
3 user, as they indicated.

4           The other thing that was quite interesting in  
5 the self-reporting surveys, 26 percent of our young drivers  
6 in the treatment group and control group received their  
7 permit within the -- I mean their license. I'm sorry. --  
8 within the first month followed by approximately the same  
9 in the second month and the same within the third month.

10           So over 75 percent of our young drivers had  
11 their license within 3 months of securing their permit.  
12 Our parents indicated -- 58 percent in both groups  
13 indicated that young drivers should be required to spend --  
14 practice 3 or more months on a permit before taking the  
15 license exam.

16           So the parents were supportive of a -- a  
17 minimum of 3 or more months before taking the exam. This  
18 supports the 6 months on the learner's permit. It also  
19 supports the adult/parent supervision with a minimum of  
20 time that was -- that is spent there.

21           The other thing that we asked the parents and  
22 students was to rate their program, rate their teacher, the  
23 curriculum and so forth. The students and parents in the  
24 treatment group consistently rated the driver education  
25 program higher than the respective teacher and program in

1 the control group.

2           The treatment group also showed that 80 to --  
3 80 percent of the students and 91 percent of the parents  
4 felt that the new driver should be required to complete a  
5 state-approved driver education program versus the 74  
6 percent and the 71 percent of the control group.

7           The majority -- I didn't say all. -- but the  
8 majority of the parents in the treatment group indicated  
9 that the meeting with the driver education teacher  
10 concerning their role and responsibility was extremely  
11 worthwhile in this endeavor.

12           In both groups, our data showed that the 16-  
13 and 17-year-olds -- we asked a question, Have you had a  
14 reportable crash? Our treatment group showed more  
15 reportable crashes than our control group. So the students  
16 were being quite honest in giving us their data.

17           But when we asked them the number and so  
18 forth, our group showed 61 collisions between both groups.  
19 In using that particular year from Department of  
20 Transportation, that group of 16- and 17-year-olds  
21 represented a -- 7.03 crashes for every 100 licensed  
22 drivers in that group versus the state's data at that time  
23 was 11.69 crashes for -- reported crashes for every 16- and  
24 17-year-old.

25           This is a little bit more than 4 1/2 percent

1 fewer crashes for the students that completed a  
2 state-approved program either as a treatment student or  
3 control student that year -- or those 3 years. It also  
4 should be noted in that particular year that only 36  
5 percent of the licensed drivers, the 16- to 17-year-olds in  
6 1995 completed a state-approved driver education program.

7           In fact, in 1996 it's even less. It was under  
8 30 percent. This data and the other information from the  
9 survey I think supports the recommendation that a young  
10 driver should be required to complete some type of  
11 state-approved driver education program while they are  
12 learning and practicing with their parent or adult.

13           I know this has been mentioned. A driver  
14 education program, a quality driver education program by  
15 itself cannot guarantee a lower risk driver nor can the  
16 parent or adult working alone. On the other hand, I think  
17 a quality driver education program along with an active  
18 parent or adult involvement in supervision and certain  
19 restrictions -- restrictions are critical. -- can and will  
20 produce a lower risk driver.

21           The enhanced driver education curriculum will  
22 be ready for distribution to the school districts with the  
23 1999 school year. We are currently finishing up the  
24 curriculum for distribution purposes.

25           In closing, our young drivers are at great



1 risk as either drivers or passengers in motor vehicles.  
2 Our Legislature, governmental agencies and other concerned  
3 groups and individuals are really to be applauded for their  
4 efforts to address this epidemic.

5           A well-planned comprehensive graduated driver  
6 licensing law will change the young driver's perception and  
7 even the adult's perception of the responsibilities that  
8 this individual is assuming when they are entering the  
9 driver licensing system in this state.

10           I spoke to a group approximately 3 months ago.  
11 And perception is very important. If we perceive entering  
12 the driver licensing system not as a privilege but as a  
13 right. And you might say why or how would we view that as  
14 such. Well, when we look at the cost of the permit, the  
15 cost of the license, the ease of securing, the test, et  
16 cetera, we can see that perhaps the perception is that it's  
17 not that difficult. But it is difficult.

18           The young drivers demonstrate that, and other  
19 drivers demonstrate that. But the risk is greatest for  
20 that 16- and 17-year-old, 18-year-old when they are  
21 entering the system. At this time, I will entertain  
22 questions.

23           CHAIRPERSON GEIST: Thank you very much,  
24 Richard. I think the state of Pennsylvania owes you a vote  
25 of gratitude, you and everyone else who have helped us

1 build this piece of legislation. And I think that from  
2 your testimony, it's very clear that this thing just didn't  
3 happen overnight.

4           There's been a lot of thought that's gone into  
5 the process. And we hope that what we've done is, with  
6 your help, built the best bill in the United States. I  
7 have no questions. Representative Santoni has one. Oh,  
8 I'm sorry. Joe.

9           REPRESENTATIVE BATTISTO: One question, sir.

10          MR. HORNFECK: Yes, sir.

11          REPRESENTATIVE BATTISTO: In the area of your  
12 testimony where you talk about the tremendous difference  
13 between a driver -- person moving from the driving part of  
14 the vehicle to the front passenger, then the back seat, in  
15 fact significantly different, 37 to 43 percent?

16          MR. HORNFECK: That's correct.

17          REPRESENTATIVE BATTISTO: And you make -- your  
18 last statement is, This data demonstrates a need for a  
19 primary safety belt law for young drivers and the occupants  
20 who ride with them. I agree with you. But I asked the  
21 previous testifier about this. And of course, I think he  
22 would agree, too.

23                 But I used the phrase about muddying the  
24 waters up in this legislation. Is it your suggestion that  
25 we not address that in this legislation and try to do it

1 separately? I have an amendment, by the way, that would do  
2 that. But I'm vacillating about that. But I'd like to  
3 hear your comments.

4 MR. HORNFECK: If it's going to muddy the  
5 legislation, I would recommend that the Legislature address  
6 that issue at a later date. But in talking with law  
7 enforcement personnel, our problem is not unique in  
8 Pennsylvania.

9 In fact, I was down in Tennessee last week  
10 doing some training for law enforcement personnel. And  
11 they would like to see a primary safety belt law as they  
12 have a primary safety belt law for youth, you know, for the  
13 young kids.

14 So, you know, to pick on the 16- and the  
15 17-year-old, sure, they are more apt to be killed in a  
16 motor vehicle crash unrestrained as passengers. But I  
17 believe that's true with a lot of our people that do ride  
18 in vehicles as passengers, not just the 16- and 17- to 18-  
19 and 19-year-old.

20 If it's going to muddy the legislation,  
21 perhaps back off at this time and then work on that after  
22 this legislation is passed because we do need this  
23 legislation.

24 REPRESENTATIVE BATTISTO: Thank you very much,  
25 sir. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

1 MR. HORNFECK: You're welcome.

2 CHAIRPERSON GEIST: I'm sorry. Representative  
3 Santoni.

4 REPRESENTATIVE SANTONI: Thank you, Mr.  
5 Chairman. A lot of times we look at what other states do  
6 obviously and try not to re-invent the wheel in a lot of  
7 situations. And the last two days of testimony we've been  
8 hearing about how kids need more experience behind the  
9 wheel.

10 Maybe the -- their age isn't really that  
11 important. Yesterday someone said that 16- and  
12 17-year-olds are mature enough to drive; they just need a  
13 little bit more experience behind the wheel. In the state  
14 of Virginia -- I know this because I have some family down  
15 there. -- they allow their drivers to actually get their  
16 permit when they're 15.

17 Just -- and then they have to meet a specified  
18 number of hours. I'm not sure how many hours, whether it's  
19 50 or -- I think it's more than that. So in their case, I  
20 think they're looking at having their kids have a little  
21 bit more time behind the wheel. They're going to be only  
22 15 years old.

23 In your opinion, would that make sense to do,  
24 maybe giving kids a little bit more opportunity, a little  
25 bit more experience, a little bit more time behind the

1 wheel and giving them the opportunity to start that when  
2 they turn 15 where they can't get their license? Similar  
3 to the way we have it here in Pennsylvania when they're 16  
4 and 17, but have that extra year behind the wheel with a  
5 parent or we're talking about education and training and  
6 things like that. I'd just like your opinion on that.

7 MR. HORNFECK: I think most of the states that  
8 have lowered the age limit in regards to the permit -- and  
9 the reason that they've done that to some degree is that in  
10 making the change requiring the supervision, longer time on  
11 the permit, the driver education component, Virginia does  
12 have requirements for driver education for licensure at a  
13 certain age.

14 I think what they -- the reason that they're  
15 doing that is so that it doesn't restrict the individual  
16 when they -- when they become 17 or 16 1/2, whenever it is  
17 that they can get the restricted license. My feelings on  
18 that is we have been 16, I think, 16 years of age. I would  
19 not recommend that we would drop that lower.

20 The key thing is with graduated driver  
21 licensing is that the student or the young driver is  
22 getting supervision while they are learning. One of the  
23 biggest problems I think that we have with the young driver  
24 when we have them in a class or when we have them in a car  
25 is that the student does not actually see the relevancy of

1 what you're trying to get across to them. They don't see  
2 how it's applicable.

3           And when Ted Leonard mentioned about the  
4 individuals coming back at a later time for a second phase,  
5 I think that's something that some states are looking at.  
6 Michigan is a good example. They do have a second phase.  
7 Because when the student then comes back, they now see the  
8 application, the applicability of what it is you're trying  
9 to get across to them; for example, in using your eyes and  
10 making decisions as a driver.

11           It's very difficult for a 16-year-old or 15  
12 year, 6 months to really grasp that -- that concept that  
13 you're trying to teach them and get them to use. So to  
14 drop the age, I would not recommend that. I really  
15 wouldn't because I think 16 years right now we have it, I  
16 believe a 16-year-old can be taught properly with parental  
17 supervision, adult supervision, school and the parent  
18 working together.

19           In fact, it's a total community involvement  
20 because you also have the enforcement aspect working with  
21 you as well.

22           REPRESENTATIVE SANTONI: Thank you, Mr.  
23 Chairman.

24           CHAIRPERSON GEIST: Thank you very much.  
25 Representative Melio.

1 REPRESENTATIVE MELIO: Yeah. I'll just ask  
2 you two questions, but I'll put them together to save time.

3 MR. HORNFECK: Okay.

4 REPRESENTATIVE MELIO: The one is, do you ask  
5 any of the students if they have insurance or if they would  
6 drive with insurance? The second one is, in overloading  
7 or, you know, the kids want to go to an event and maybe 20  
8 of them pile in a car.

9 I mean, that may be an exaggeration. But does  
10 that come into your accidents in a back seat where, you  
11 know the kids --

12 MR. HORNFECK: Well, the data that we  
13 collected, there were -- there was no question as it  
14 relates to insurance. Okay. Secondly, as it relates to  
15 number of passengers, there were no questions related to  
16 that. Something that I know other states have used is no  
17 more passengers than there are safety belts for the young  
18 driver that is on the restricted license, for the young  
19 driver on the restricted license or junior license as we  
20 have in Pennsylvania.

21 REPRESENTATIVE MELIO: Thank you.

22 MR. HORNFECK: You're welcome.

23 CHAIRPERSON GEIST: Ellen Bard for the last  
24 question.

25 REPRESENTATIVE BARD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

1 I just wanted to ask you about your testimony. You said  
2 you felt that the state should not wait until 6 points were  
3 accumulated to suspend the license?

4 MR. HORNFECK: That's right.

5 REPRESENTATIVE BARD: What number of points do  
6 you recommend, 3, 4? How many? What's your  
7 recommendation?

8 MR. HORNFECK: Well, when you look at the  
9 point -- the violation and the points, so forth, there are  
10 very few violations that are less than 3. Serious  
11 violations start at 3 points. And I think -- and if you  
12 look at the -- and we're not talking about a low speeding  
13 violation.

14 I believe that -- I believe you would have to  
15 indicate 3 points. And -- because what you're doing at 3  
16 points, if you look at the data that we have moving  
17 violations and causes of crashes, most of them were caused  
18 because of failure to yield, speed too fast for conditions.

19 And 3 to 4 points would probably be the max  
20 because if you allow a -- what I call 6 points as we do for  
21 the unrestricted license at this time, we're saying, hey,  
22 that's okay. And once again, it's that perception. If  
23 it's okay to exceed the posted speed by 15 and only get 3  
24 points, then, you know, I know I've got 3 points. It might  
25 be going through their head.



1           So I believe 3 to 4 points would probably be  
2 the maximum for a person on a restricted license or junior  
3 license.

4           REPRESENTATIVE BARD: Thank you.

5           MR. HORNFECK: You're welcome.

6           CHAIRPERSON GEIST: Representative Pippy.

7           REPRESENTATIVE PIPPY: Thank you, Mr.  
8 Chairman. You had mentioned something, Dr. Hornfeck,  
9 earlier that I found very interesting as far as remedial  
10 training. I know there are other states where if you are  
11 caught, your first violation during a one-year period, you  
12 can go back for 8-hour safety course.

13           So you won't get points. You still pay the  
14 fine for the ticket; however, you won't get the points,  
15 subsequently the increase in the insurance rate. Is that  
16 the type of program you're talking about? I know being in  
17 the military, I've been in a couple of states and had the  
18 opportunity to take one of those courses once.

19           And they focused more on safety, seat belt  
20 usage, showed a lot of films on what happens to those who  
21 are in the back seat and don't have seat belts. Is that  
22 the type of program that you think may be something we  
23 should pursue in Pennsylvania?

24           MR. HORNFECK: Well, let me answer that  
25 question by mentioning earlier that Ted Leonard mentioned

1 about a second phase of driver education. Well, if we  
2 don't have a second phase of driver education, not every  
3 student might need that.

4 But if a student does need a second phase,  
5 perhaps it might be the remedial phase coming back. Now,  
6 to the type of program, I do not believe it should be a  
7 canned program. I don't believe that it should be anything  
8 from the AAA or National Safety Council or any group that  
9 currently has a driver improvement program out there.

10 I think it should be a program geared to the  
11 young driver, the 16- and 17-year-old that's demonstrated  
12 -- demonstrating that they are not using the  
13 responsibilities or taking the responsibilities of driving  
14 to the maximum.

15 And it's just a small percentage of what we  
16 showed with our data with the students reporting. But the  
17 amount of hours, yes, it's not going to be anything -- I  
18 wouldn't recommend anything great length and so forth. But  
19 it's just a matter of perhaps reinforcing what it is they  
20 should be doing or complementing what they don't have, that  
21 they didn't get prior to coming there.

22 REPRESENTATIVE PIPPY: Thank you. Thank you,  
23 Mr. Chairman.

24 CHAIRPERSON GEIST: Thank you very much. And  
25 we certainly appreciate your testimony. Our next presenter

1 is Brian Stauffer. He's a parent. And I think that Brian  
2 will be the perfect way to bring up our end of our  
3 testimony before we hear from the Deputy Secretary. Brian,  
4 do you have a prepared statement with you?

5 MR. STAUFFER: I really don't have anything  
6 prepared, just a few notes.

7 CHAIRPERSON GEIST: That's all you need.

8 MR. STAUFFER: I just walked through the door  
9 so I'm glad we were able to get here. I'd just like to  
10 thank Representative Snyder for giving me the opportunity  
11 to be here and for Judy Stish for putting things together  
12 so that I get this appointment for this time.

13 I didn't feel the need for a prepared speech.  
14 I'm not a speechmaker. I'll leave that all up to you. I'm  
15 here to just tell my story, as I'll call it, because being  
16 unprepared is what exactly I've been experiencing since the  
17 death of my daughter. Why? Because I've had so many  
18 things happen in the last couple of weeks.

19 We've had Tara's mother and her stepfather and  
20 our families and loved ones and everyone. We just have  
21 been completely overwhelmed. I'd just like to share with  
22 you a little bit of what we've gone through and how maybe  
23 it can relate to what I've been introduced to in this  
24 legislative newsletter regarding the licensing reform for  
25 teen drivers.

1 First of all, I'd just like to say that I  
2 wholeheartedly support it. If every one of these bulletin  
3 items can happen as quickly as possible, then that would be  
4 a start, I'll say, because I'm sure that from that point on  
5 things can be worked on even further as we see what would  
6 happen. But I just wanted to let everyone know in this  
7 room that I wholeheartedly support it.

8 The Friday night of the accident was pretty  
9 much like any other Friday night for my daughter Tara. She  
10 was just going to go out to a basketball game with her best  
11 friend. And my wife Shelly and our youngest daughter  
12 Lynzie had just spoken with her before they had gone out.

13 And up until that point, you're pretty much  
14 just not, you know, you're kind of going through life, you  
15 know, as I'll call it. And we pretty much spent the night  
16 watching the explosion that had happened in the Allentown  
17 area on television and gone to bed like usual until that  
18 phone call came.

19 Then from that point on, my life has been  
20 changed. And some neighbors of ours had given us this  
21 newsletter from Representative Snyder. And when I read  
22 that this licensing reform was a possibility, I immediately  
23 felt like I had to do something, at least let  
24 Representative Snyder know that I support it and what could  
25 I do, what could I do instead of being helpless?

1 I know my daughter is dead. I saw it so many  
2 times. I can't bring her back. But if I can urge you to  
3 make this happen quickly, then maybe yourselves as parents  
4 or relation to nieces and nephews that are about to  
5 undertake this license -- driving, friends of your family,  
6 whatever, that are going to be approaching this age or are  
7 already there -- you don't have to be the driver.

8 Tara wasn't the driver. She was a passenger.  
9 So I just wanted to urge you all and without sharing any  
10 other details of that night, just having experienced it all  
11 and still experiencing it all. Visiting her grave almost  
12 daily, I still don't believe it. I don't.

13 And I wouldn't want to see anybody else go  
14 through it either. I have nieces and nephews that are  
15 approaching this age. I don't know how long this would  
16 take. I don't -- I don't know. But I would hope that  
17 things can be moved along quickly enough.

18 You know, not having been involved with this  
19 sort of thing, because this is my very first time speaking,  
20 that a lot of what needs to be done I guess must take  
21 place. And if that can be moved along quickly so that  
22 something can be put in place, something to have a start so  
23 that any teens that are going to -- in the next couple of  
24 months, for that matter, that would be eventually getting  
25 to that age that could be getting a teen license, to have

1 something happen quickly enough to start protecting,  
2 safeguard them.

3 I always think about the possibilities of what  
4 had something -- if something like these reforms had been  
5 in place already. Would that have helped Tara? Maybe.  
6 There's a lot of if's that are unanswered. But I really  
7 think so. I don't know what you can do. All I ask is that  
8 you do it quickly.

9 That's really all I have to say. Shelly, did  
10 you want to say anything at all? This is my wife Shelly,  
11 Tara's stepmother.

12 MRS. STAUFFER: Before this had happened, we  
13 all know that there's always been crashes and accidents  
14 with kids. And just a week after this happened with Tara,  
15 there was another two girls killed in our area, the  
16 Bethlehem area, 16 and 17-years-old.

17 And we just say as parents that something has  
18 to change. This has to stop. We don't have the answers,  
19 but we are willing to come here and talk and share and push  
20 and do whatever we can to make it happen because we don't  
21 want other parents going through this.

22 It's -- we just know something has to be done,  
23 and that's why we're here. It's been a rough time. It's  
24 going to get worse. But maybe by the time our daughter  
25 drives -- she's only four now and misses her sister dearly.

1 We're going to be strict on her whether or not these  
2 change. Maybe making parents more responsible for these  
3 kids.

4 We're not sure exactly what. But every week  
5 seeing something in the paper that this is happening, it  
6 just has to stop. Something has to be done. And if we can  
7 do more -- I'm sure --

8 MR. STAUFFER: We'll do it.

9 MRS. STAUFFER: -- I speak for Brian, too. --  
10 we're here. You know, we will do it. Not only from a  
11 parent's side but from any other side, legal or whatever it  
12 takes. Tara was a great kid. She was -- she just started  
13 having everything going in her life, 15 years old.

14 She was on her way. She was like the perfect  
15 role model, "A" student, which maybe you've heard these  
16 stories before. Parents coming in. She didn't get a  
17 second chance in life. Why? We don't know why. People go  
18 to jail, come out. They get second chances, but she  
19 didn't. And she didn't deserve it. And we just want it  
20 stopped somehow.

21 CHAIRPERSON GEIST: We want to thank you very,  
22 very much for testifying. Both Chairman Battisto and I  
23 have -- want to give you our heartfelt thanks. And we hope  
24 that the work of this Committee and everybody who has  
25 participated in building this piece of legislation can be a

1 testament to those who had this problem.

2           And we certainly want to thank you and your  
3 wife for coming down today. And I think in respect for  
4 Tara and you, we're going to not have questions from any of  
5 the House members. So we want to thank you very much for  
6 presenting. Thank you.

7           MR. STAUFFER: Thank you.

8           CHAIRPERSON GEIST: Our next presenter will be  
9 Betty Serian. Everybody in this Committee knows her. She  
10 is flanked by her lieutenant, Rebecca Bickley. And they  
11 have participated in framing this legislation in a  
12 partnership with the House and the Senate.

13           And Betty, if you could summarize your  
14 legislation, I'm sure that there are those on this panel  
15 who have questions for you. And then we want to get about  
16 the business of, as Mr. Stauffer said, moving ahead  
17 rapidly. And we want to move this bill out of Committee  
18 today.

19           So as soon as you're done, we're going to go  
20 about our work. Thank you.

21           MS. SERIAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I  
22 really appreciate the opportunity to speak with you today.  
23 Almost everything that Becky and I would have to say, the  
24 Stauffer family pretty much said it for us. They urged  
25 swift passage of this legislation to save lives, and that



1 is exactly what we want to do.

2 We have put into place, we believe, under  
3 Governor Ridge's direction, the kinds of things that will  
4 help save young lives and reduce crashes. There is almost  
5 nothing else that I could say aside from my sorrow and  
6 condolences to the Stauffer family.

7 We can look at all of those statistics. We  
8 can talk about them all day long, but what you don't see  
9 behind those statistics are the heartaches of families like  
10 the Stauffers or the beautiful children like Tara's  
11 picture. So I don't want to talk a lot about statistics,  
12 Mr. Chairman.

13 I want to commend the Transportation Committee  
14 for your efforts and your role. And I want us to get about  
15 the business of passing, with your help, swift legislation  
16 that's going to save lives.

17 CHAIRPERSON GEIST: Thank you very much.  
18 Those are the kind of statements we like. If you would be  
19 so kind, I believe we have some questions from the House  
20 members that you and Becky can certainly answer. And we  
21 know that if you can't, Ann over here can handle anything.  
22 So Joe.

23 REPRESENTATIVE BATTISTO: Just one question,  
24 Betty. I have an amendment that would put the curfew part  
25 of the legislation in effect within 30 days instead of

1 waiting 180 days. I know you need time -- you need time to  
2 mobilize your forces to put everything else into place.

3 But the issue of putting the -- the curfew  
4 part in effect as soon as possible I think is something I'd  
5 like to do. And I'd like to listen to your comment.

6 MS. SERIAN: And I think we should do that,  
7 Representative Battisto. And we can do that very quickly.

8 REPRESENTATIVE BATTISTO: Thank you very much.  
9 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

10 CHAIRPERSON GEIST: I have one question to ask  
11 for Sam Smith, and that's on the certification of the  
12 50-hour requirement. The Department will promulgate a  
13 regulation on how that's to be done or to -- are we going  
14 to accept the signature of the parent, guardian or teacher  
15 as the certification?

16 MS. SERIAN: I'm sure that Becky and I would  
17 agree that we would hope we wouldn't have to go through  
18 regulation to do that. We believe that the strength of  
19 that certification should be on the signature of a parent,  
20 and we believe that most parents will certainly tell the  
21 truth.

22 CHAIRPERSON GEIST: Representative Hess.

23 REPRESENTATIVE HESS: Thank you, Mr.  
24 Chairman. Betty, we spoke about this yesterday. I'm sure  
25 you're prepared. What percentage of the first year drivers

1 have accidents?

2 MS. SERIAN: Fourteen percent of 16-year-olds  
3 represent --

4 REPRESENTATIVE HESS: Fourteen percent of 16?

5 MS. SERIAN: Uh-huh.

6 REPRESENTATIVE HESS: One more question. The  
7 amount of permits that are applied for, they are \$5; am I  
8 correct?

9 MS. SERIAN: That's correct.

10 REPRESENTATIVE HESS: Where do those funds go  
11 to?

12 MS. SERIAN: They go to motor license funds.

13 REPRESENTATIVE HESS: Motor license funds?

14 MS. SERIAN: That's correct.

15 REPRESENTATIVE HESS: Do they stay there, or  
16 do they go to the Department of Education?

17 MS. SERIAN: They are not earmarked funds so  
18 they stay there, and they are used with other revenues on  
19 highway and bridge improvements.

20 REPRESENTATIVE HESS: Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON GEIST: Representative Melio.

22 REPRESENTATIVE MELIO: Yeah. Thank you. When  
23 are you going to become captain?

24 MS. SERIAN: I'm sorry?

25 REPRESENTATIVE MELIO: He said your

1 lieutenant. I just wanted to say that it's always nice to  
2 have amendments that could strengthen the bill. But I  
3 think Chairman Geist will be happy to know that to get this  
4 thing through, I won't enter any amendments even though  
5 from this hearing, there has been some testimony that, you  
6 know, has been very informative. Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON GEIST: Thank you. Representative  
8 Bard.

9 REPRESENTATIVE BARD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.  
10 We've had testimony today. I have a couple of questions I  
11 wanted to ask you as follow-up. It was recommended that  
12 the number of points that would trigger a suspension be  
13 reduced to 3 or 4. What is your opinion on that?

14 MS. SERIAN: You go ahead, Becky, you have --  
15 Rebecca Bickley, who is the Director of Driver Licensing  
16 has an awful lot of experience in this area as well as  
17 sanctioning drivers in a lot of different ways. So please  
18 go ahead.

19 MS. BICKLEY: Okay. The PennDOT proposal for  
20 6 points leading to a suspension is based on a very lengthy  
21 systematic and comprehensive review of research regarding  
22 young drivers and why their crashes are inordinately high.  
23 We believe that at 3 points, we would be unnecessarily  
24 penalizing young drivers who may have a single error in  
25 judgment or a single mistake.

1           At 3 points, if someone rolled through a stop  
2 sign once, they would automatically be suspended. At 3  
3 points, if someone had a speeding conviction of just a  
4 little over 10 miles per hour over the speed limit, they  
5 would automatically be suspended.

6           We think that that is too onerous. And we're  
7 trying to, through the course of our development of this  
8 proposal, weigh truly safety and mobility and those  
9 concerns for each and every young driver.

10           REPRESENTATIVE BARD: Another -- we heard from  
11 the students that they felt that this could be effective  
12 for permit holders and try to speed up the effects of this  
13 law in that way by making it more applicable to those who  
14 are currently under the system. What is your perspective  
15 on that?

16           MS. SERIAN: That's a very -- that's a very  
17 good question, Representative Bard. And I -- without  
18 responding off-the-cuff on that, so to speak, we really  
19 would like to take a look at that. We'd need to look at  
20 all the details surrounding how to bring in those students  
21 who already have permits and try to apply that. And we'd  
22 be willing to take a very strong look if we can do that.

23           REPRESENTATIVE BARD: Thank you very much.

24           CHAIRPERSON GEIST: Thank you. Representative  
25 Hess has a follow-up, and then we're going to adjourn.

1 REPRESENTATIVE HESS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.  
2 Betty, how many license -- or how many permits do you issue  
3 annually?

4 MS. SERIAN: About 48,000.

5 REPRESENTATIVE HESS: 48,000?

6 MS. SERIAN: Uh-huh.

7 REPRESENTATIVE HESS: Now, I'm on the  
8 understanding that PennDOT does pay a certain amount of  
9 dollars per student or whatever to the Department of  
10 Education. How much is that?

11 MS. SERIAN: That's correct. I believe that's  
12 \$35 per student.

13 REPRESENTATIVE HESS: \$35 per student. So  
14 then the \$5 permit fee does not near cover what PennDOT  
15 pays to the Department of Ed.?

16 MS. SERIAN: That's correct.

17 REPRESENTATIVE HESS: I'm glad to hear that.  
18 Sounds good. Sounds very good. Thank you very much.

19 MS. SERIAN: You're welcome.

20 CHAIRPERSON GEIST: Thank you very much,  
21 Betty. And I want to thank everybody who presented and  
22 gave testimony. And I want to thank the members of this  
23 Committee for their patience. At this time, the hearing is  
24 adjourned. And we will move directly into a meeting of the  
25 Committee.


1                   And if anybody wants to leave or stay, I think  
2 now is the time to do that. We're going to forge right  
3 ahead. Thank you.

4  
5                   (Whereupon, at 10:25 a.m., the hearing  
6 adjourned.)

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I hereby certify that the proceedings and evidence are contained fully and accurately in the notes taken by me during the hearing of the within cause and that this is a true and correct transcript of the same.



JENNIFER P. TROUTMAN

Registered Professional Reporter

My Commission Expires:

April 30, 2001

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