

MINUTES OF THE SENATE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Dwayne Umbarger at 8:30 a.m. on March 11, 2009, in Room 136-N of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Senator Anthony Hensley- excused

Committee staff present:

Mike Corrigan, Office of the Revisor of Statutes
Jill Shelley, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Cindy Shepard, Committee Assistant

Conferees appearing before the Committee:

Terry Heidner, Legislative Liason, Kansas Department of Transportation
Art Wilburn, Captain, Kansas Highway Patrol
Rod Bremby, Secretary, Kansas Department of Health & Environment
Suzanne Wikle, Director of Health Policy, Kansas Action for Children
Phyllis Larimore, Board Member, Kansas Safe Kids
Darlene Whitlock, Trama Coordinator, Stormont Vail Trauma Services
James Hanni, Executive Vice- President, AAA Kansas
Jackie Wells, Public Affairs Specialist, State Farm Insurance Companies
Bill Kennedy, Owner/Teacher, Topeka Driving School

Others attending:

See attached list.

Chairman Umbarger opened the hearing on **HB 2143 - Driver's licenses; restrictions.**

Jill Shelley reviewed the bill and provided a comparison of current law with the major provisions of **HB 2143** (Attachment 1).

Terry Heidner, Legislative Liaison for the Kansas Department of Transportation, provided testimony in support of **HB 2143**. This proposed legislation was one of the many recommendations from the *Driving Force*, a citizens task force studying ways to reduce fatalities on Kansas roadways. Mr. Heidner stated that this bill addresses the three areas where young drivers are most at risk; more driving experience while in the learning phase, limitations on teen passengers and nighttime driving when they are first allowed to drive without adult supervision (Attachment 2).

Captain Art Wilburn, representing the Kansas Highway Patrol, appeared as a proponent of the bill. Captain Wilburn stated that Graduated Driver's License (GDL) programs are proven to help teens gain maturity and experience behind the wheel. Teens rank highest in crashes attributed to speeding, aggressive and reckless driving. Several of the provisions set forth in **HB 2143** tackle issues proven to reduce teen crash rates. (Attachment 3).

Rod Bremby, Secretary of the Kansas Department of Health & Environment, testified in favor of **HB 2143**. Secretary Bremby indicated that teen drivers ages 14 - 19 account for only six percent of all Kansas registered drivers, but they represent 20 percent of all crashes. Unintentional injuries kill more young Kansans than any other cause, and motor vehicle crashes result in nearly half of these deaths. Enacting a GDL bill will save lives and reduce injuries to Kansas teens (Attachment 4).

Suzanne Wikle, Director of Health Policy for Kansas Action for Children, spoke in support of the bill. She stated that Kansas is lagging behind when it comes to properly preparing our teens for the responsibility of driving. The three greatest risks to new teen drivers are inexperience, multiple passengers and late night driving. Kansas is one of only three states that have not taken important steps to better prepare novice teen drivers. Without a cost to the state, implementing **HB 2143** will bring our teen licensing system up to speed and create safer roads (Attachment 5).

Phyllis Larimore, Board Member of Kansas Safe Kids, appeared as a proponent of **HB 2143**. According to Ms. Larimore, motor vehicle crashes are still the leading cause of death for Kansas children ages 1 - 17.

CONTINUATION SHEET

Minutes of the Senate Transportation Committee at 8:30 a.m. on March 11, 2009, in Room 136-N of the Capitol.

These deaths and injuries cause an economic and societal impact on our Kansas families ([Attachment 6](#)).

Darlene Whitlock RN, ARNP and Trauma Coordinator for Stormont Vail Health Care, testified in favor of **HB 2143**. Ms. Whitlock stated as co-chair of the *Driving Force* task force, their one goal was to reduce the number of fatalities and injuries on Kansas's roadways. An area of concern was the over representation of teen injuries in those who are beginning to drive. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has identified Graduated Driver Licensing as an effective measure in reducing novice driver crashes. Passage of this bill supports life-saving legislation ([Attachment 7](#)).

James Hanni, Executive Vice- President of AAA Kansas, presented testimony in support of **HB 2143**. He indicated that the changes to K.S.A. 8-235d and 8-296 and K.S.A. 2008 Supp. 8-237 are straightforward and simple. They provide only the most effective, yet fair and reasonable, countermeasures to make substantial reductions in motor vehicle crashes, injuries and deaths among Kansas's young drivers. Research conducted by Wichita University and others indicates overwhelming support from Kansas voters and parents for a graduated system of licensing ([Attachment 8](#)).

Jackie Wells, Public Affairs Specialist for State Farm Insurance Companies, appeared as a proponent of **HB 2143**. She stated that according to experts, GDL is one of the few tools effective in reducing the crash risk of new drivers. Research studies estimate a crash reduction of up to 40% in states with strong GDL laws. Kansas is behind the curve on this important issue and has a significant opportunity to make simple, effective, no-cost changes that will help reverse negative teen driver trends, resulting in safer roads and reduced costs for all ([Attachment 9](#)).

Bill Kennedy, Owner/Teacher of Topeka Driving School, spoke in opposition to **HB 2143**. According to Mr. Kennedy, this bill eliminates the requirement for driver education. Thousands of teenage novice drivers in Kansas will skip driver education training ([Attachment 10](#)).

Written testimony in support of **HB 2143** was submitted by:

Deb Miller, Secretary of Transportation, State of Kansas ([Attachment 11](#))

Ed Klumpp, Legislative Committee Chair, Kansas Association of Chiefs of Police & Kansas Peace Officers Association ([Attachment 12](#))

Dennis Cooley, MD, American Academy of Pediatrics, Kansas Chapter ([Attachment 13](#))

Brad Harrelson, Government Relations, Kansas Farm Bureau ([Attachment 14](#))

There being no further conferees, the hearing on **HB 2143** was closed.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:28 a.m. The next meeting is scheduled for March 12, 2009.