

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Vice-Chairman Virgil Peck at 1:30 P.M. on March 14, 2007 in Room 519-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Representative Jerry Henry- excused  
Representative Tom Sloan- excused  
Representative Mark Treaster- excused

Committee staff present:

Hank Avila, Kansas Legislative Research  
Bruce Kinzie, Revisor of Statutes Office  
Betty Boaz, Committee Assistant

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Dr. Howard Rodenberg, Director of Health, Dept. of Health & Environment  
Deb Miller, Secretary of Kansas Dept. of Transportation  
Col. William Seck, Superintendent of Kansas Highway Patrol  
Jim Hanni, representing AAA Allied Group  
Ed Klump, representing Kansas Association of Chiefs of Police  
Angie Nordhus, State Child Death Review Board  
Cindy Conner, Citizen, Kansas City area  
Deb Ward, Citizen, Kansas City area

Others attending:

See attached list.

The meeting was opened by Vice-Chairman Peck who chaired the meeting until Chairman Hayzlett arrived. Vice-Chair Peck opened the hearing on **SB 294**.

**SB 294 - Drivers licenses, age requirements**

Dr. Howard Rodenberg, Director of Health, Department of Health and Environment was the first proponent for **SB 294**. (Attachment #1) According to Dr. Rodenberg, unintentional injuries kill more young Kansans than any other cause and motor vehicle crashes result in nearly half of these deaths. He said according to the Kansas Department of Transportation, drivers ages 14 through 19 were involved in 17,978 crashes in 2004 for an estimated cost of \$653,832,300. Dr. Rodenberg said the effectiveness of Graduated driver licensing laws as a prevention strategy has been widely demonstrated. That the states who have responded to the national priority of protecting young drivers by raising their minimum driving ages and implementing GDL are experiencing the pay off. He concluded by saying that it is time for Kansas to act on the evidence base that calls for graduated drivers licensing.

The next proponent was Colonel William Seck, Superintendent of the Kansas Highway Patrol. (Attachment #2) According to Col. Seck, graduated driver's license programs, have proven to help teens gain maturity and experience behind the wheel, which assist in reducing the high crash rates for drivers in their age group. He said teens rank highest in crashes attributed to speeding, aggressive and reckless driving, and distractions. All these factors could be minimized with education, experience and maturity according to Col. Seck. He concluded by saying the Highway Patrol supports **SB 294** and asked the Committee to favorably pass this bill.

Jim Hanni was the next proponent to testify before the Committee. (Attachment #3) According to Mr. Hanni, AAA supports changes to the current licensing system in **SB 294**. He said because so many other states have enacted true GDL systems, there is plenty of evidence that GDL, as proposed, clearly works to reduce novice driver car crashes significantly. Mr. Hanni said in addition to parent and teen attitudes of approval there is a wide public support for improving our GDL system. He said these changes will strongly benefit both rural and urban parents and teens, however, experience indicates greater reductions in crashes, particularly serious injury and fatal ones, will occur for rural than for urban families.

The next proponent was Deb Miller, Secretary, Department of Transportation. (Attachment #4) Secretary

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Miller reminded the Committee that this legislation was one of the recommendations from the Driving Force task force. She also advised the Committee that in response to concerns about the 9:00 p.m. driving restriction, this bill was amended by the Senate Committee of the Whole to allow those with a restricted license to drive to and from school and religious activities. According to Secretary Miller, motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for 16 - 20 year olds with two of the riskiest situations for young drivers being nighttime driving and driving with other teenage passengers - which **SB 294** addresses. She also said Kansas is one of only five states without nighttime or passenger restrictions.

Ed Klumpp, representing the Kansas Association of Chiefs of Police was the next proponent to testify on **SB 294**. (Attachment #5) Mr. Klumpp said law enforcement agencies recognize this legislation may pose some challenges in enforcing the GDL rules. However, he said, enforcing the provisions of this bill cannot be half as difficult as telling a parent their child was severely injured or killed in a vehicle crash. He said this bill has been crafted to address the needs of urban and rural Kansas that it has the components to minimize peer pressure to engage in dangerous driving behavior.

The Chairman recognized Angela Nordhus, Executive Director, State Child Death Review Board. (Attachment #6) According to Ms. Nordhus, Kansas has lost a total of 807 children under the age of 17 from 1994 through 2004. She said almost all of the motor vehicle deaths involved risk factors, such as inexperience or inattentive driving, lack of safety restraints, and excessive speed. Ms. Nordhus concluded by saying they believe graduated driver licensing systems are compelling and such a system in Kansas will save lives.

The last proponent was Cindy Conner, whose teenage son was killed in a motor vehicle accident while on his way to school. (Attachment #7) He was a passenger in a car driven by one of his school friends. He was not wearing his safety belt and the driver of the car was speeding and driving recklessly. She concluded by saying that "driving restrictions may not be convenient for parents...but they are much less of a burden than planning a funeral."

The Chairman asked if there were any other proponents - there were none. The Chairman drew the Committee's attention to the written testimony submitted in support of **SB 294** from Cindy D'Ercole, KS Action for Children; Terry Holdren, Kansas Farm Bureau; Jan Stegelman, Safe Kids Kansas; and the Kansas State Nurses Association.

There being no other proponents the Chairman called for opponents to **SB 294**.

The only opponent to testify on this bill was Debbie Ward, a resident of Johnson County. (Attachment #8) According to Ms. Ward, strict enforcement of a proposed safety belt law for 14-17 year olds will dramatically reduce teen fatalities. She said strict enforcement of the safety belt bill combined with a strong no cell phone usage law would solve the problems. She quoted the Director of the Highway Safety for the Missouri Department of Transportation as saying part of the problem has been enforcing the section of the law that allows police to pull over teens for not wearing their safety belts. Ms. Ward said total elimination of the teen driving laws currently in place is too drastic and tells our children that we do not think they are responsible to be driving at 16. Ms. Ward concluded by saying the Committee should remember the 99% of the teens in Kansas who are responsible and not the small minority of teen drivers who are not.

There being no other opponents to this bill present, the Chairman drew the Committee's attention to a letter submitted by Timothy M. O'Brien, attorney, Overland Park, KS in opposition to this bill.

After all questions were answered the Chairman closed the hearing on **SB 294**.

It was the Chairman's desire to work **HB 2071**. An amendment was proposed to remove Section 7 of the bill which would have designated K-53 Highway as the Patriot Guard Highway. This amendment would also clean up some antiquated language in the bill regarding road openings between March 1 and October 1. The Chairman called for questions, motions or comments. Representative Vickrey made a motion to amend **HB 2071**, seconded by Representative George and the motion carried. Back on the bill, Representative Vickrey

then made a motion to favorably pass **HB 2071**, as amended. The motion was seconded by Representative

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Huntington and the motion carried.

The Chairman advised the Committee he wanted to work **SB 211**. The Committee was briefed on **SB 211**, as amended by the Senate. Chairman Hayzlett called for questions, motions, or comments on this bill. Representative Swanson made a motion to add the definition of 'passenger car', seconded by Representative Sharp and the motion carried. Back on the bill, Representative Menghini made a motion to amend page 2, section 2 to say the fine would be \$60 plus court costs, seconded by Representative Swanson and the motion carried. Back on the bill, Representative Huntington made a motion to prohibit electronic devices through the age of 17, seconded by Representative Menghini, the motion failed. Back on the bill, Representative Vickrey made a motion to favorably pass, seconded by Representative Swanson and the motion carried to favorably pass **SB 211**, as amended.

There being no further business before the Committee the Chairman adjourned the meeting. The next meeting will be on March 15, 2007, at 1:30 p.m. in Room 519-S.