



Testimony in support of A3793- Requires certain permit holder to complete practice driving hours to obtain probationary driver's license
Assembly Transportation Committee
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Good morning, Chairman Benson and members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Lauren Paterno, spokesperson for the Partners for Practice Hours. We are a group of more than 25 like-minded traffic safety, education, health, and insurance organizations that support A3793, sponsored by Chairman Benson. Chairman, thank you for your leadership on this important legislation. A3793 will require new permit holders under the age of 21 to complete 50 supervised hours of driving practice.

New Jersey is one of only three states, along with Arkansas and Mississippi, that do not require practice hours, even though consistent training during the learning period has shown a reduction in crashes during the first year of driving. In fact, the federal government strongly encourages this vital practice. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) recommends parental certification of practice hours as part of their recommended Graduated Driver License (GDL) provisions.

According to the most recent New Jersey Department of Transportation crash data available, over 28,000 drivers ages 16-20 were involved in crashes in New Jersey in 2020, including over 7,000 involved in injury or fatal crashes. This means that every 19 minutes, someone under 21 is involved in a crash on a NJ roadway. The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety estimates that if New Jersey were to require 50 practice hours, collision claims for the youngest drivers could be reduced by 13%, and fatal crashes could be reduced by 3%.

As we all know, traffic crashes and fatalities are rising at an alarming rate in New Jersey. According to the NJ State Police, fatalities have risen nearly 26% since 2019. In 2022, 705 people were killed – the most fatalities on New Jersey roads in 15 years. Requiring new young drivers to log 50 practice hours will not only provide them with the vital experience they need to drive safely and confidently but it will also result in a reduction of injuries and fatalities.

It's time for New Jersey to join 47 other states in passing a practice hours requirement for young drivers. I urge you to vote yes on A3793. On behalf of the members of Partners for Practice Hours, thank you again for allowing me to testify today.

Members of Partners for Practice Hours include: AAA Clubs of New Jersey; Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety; Allstate New Jersey Insurance Company; Amica Mutual Insurance Company; Brain Injury Alliance of NJ; Consumer Federation of America; Emergency Nurses Association New Jersey State Council; Families for Safe Streets NJ; Insurance Council of NJ; Kids and Car Safety; Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) New Jersey; National Safety Council; Nationwide Mutual Insurance Company; Nikhil Badlani Foundation; NJ Driver Education Committee; NJM Insurance Group; NJ PTA; NJ Teen Safe Driving Coalition; SADD; Safe Kids Worldwide; Selective Insurance Company of America; Society of Health and Physical Educators of NJ; Society for Advancement of Violence and Injury Research; State Farm Insurance Companies; The Center for Auto Safety; and Vision Zero Alliance of NJ.