



ADVOCATES
FOR HIGHWAY
& AUTO SAFETY

December 21, 2023

The Honorable Philip D. Murphy
Governor of New Jersey
Office of the Governor
225 West State Street
Trenton, New Jersey 08625

Dear Governor Murphy:

Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety (Advocates), an alliance of consumer, safety, medical, public health and law enforcement groups and insurance companies working together to pass highway and auto safety laws that prevent crashes, save lives, reduce injuries, and contain costs, urges you to sign Senate Bill (S.) 2789/ Assembly Bill (A.) 3793 into law. Taking this action will improve the state's graduated driver licensing (GDL) law by requiring supervised driving hours for novice teen and young adult drivers.

New Jersey is one of only three states (AR, MS) without any requirement for novice drivers to complete behind-the-wheel driver training with an adult licensed driver during the examination permit phase. S. 2789/ A. 3793 would close this dangerous safety gap by requiring 50 hours of supervised driver training, 10 hours of which must be at night, prior to obtaining a probationary driver license.

Motor vehicle crashes are a leading cause of death for teens.ⁱ Per mile driven, drivers aged 16 to 19 are three times as likely to be in a fatal crash.ⁱⁱ From 2018 through 2022, 313 crash fatalities involved drivers under 21 in New Jersey.ⁱⁱⁱ Yet, compelling research shows that comprehensive GDL laws, which include a supervised driving requirement, reduce crashes and save lives. It is estimated that requiring 50 hours of supervised driving in the Garden State would reduce fatal crashes by three percent and collision claims by 13 percent.^{iv} Every life lost indelibly impacts families, friends and communities.

Graduated driver licensing laws also save states money by reducing crash related costs. In New Jersey, motor vehicle crashes cost the state more than \$14 billion annually.^v Furthermore, there is overwhelming support for comprehensive GDL programs. A survey found that parents favor GDL laws that are as strict as or even stricter than currently exist in any state.^{vi}

Upgrading the GDL program to include a supervised driving requirement will help to improve novice teen and young adult driver skills and make roads safer for the novice driver as well as all who share the roads with them. Saving lives is the best holiday gift that you can give your constituents.

Sincerely,

Catherine Chase, President

ⁱ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC). WISQARS (Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System). U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; July 2020. Available at <https://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/index.html>. Accessed 1 October 2020.

ⁱⁱ Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS). Fatality facts: Teenagers 2017. Available at <http://www.iihs.org/iihs/topics/t/teenagers/fatalityfacts/teenagers>.

ⁱⁱⁱ NHTSA. State of New Jersey Highway Safety Plan, available at https://www.nhtsa.gov/sites/nhtsa.gov/files/2023-10/NJ_FY24HSP-tag.pdf.

^{iv} IIHS. GDL Crash Reduction Calculator available at: <https://www.iihs.org/topics/teenagers/gdl-calculator>.

^v NHTSA. The Economic and Societal Impact of Motor Vehicle Crashes, 2019, DOT HS 813 403, December 2022.

^{vi} Williams, A.F; Braitman, K.A.; and McCart, A.T. 2010. Views of parents of teenagers about licensing policies: a national survey. Arlington, VA: IIHS, available [here](#).