



ADVOCATES  
FOR HIGHWAY  
& AUTO SAFETY

May 23, 2024

The Honorable Greg Treat, President Pro Tempore  
The Honorable Greg McCortney, Majority Floor Leader  
The Honorable Kay Floyd, Democratic Leader  
Oklahoma Senate  
2300 N. Lincoln Blvd.,  
Oklahoma City, OK 73105

Dear President Pro Tempore Treat, Majority Floor Leader McCortney, and Democratic Leader Floyd:

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 oppose House Bill (HB) 3191. This measure will eliminate passenger limits for novice teen drivers who have an intermediate Class D license (intermediate license) or who have a farmer's permit. In doing so, it will weaken the graduated driver licensing (GDL) law and threaten the safety of these drivers and all who share the roads with them.

Current law prohibits drivers with an intermediate license from driving with more than one passenger unless supervised by a licensed adult over the age of 21 or if all the passengers reside in the same household. Similarly, drivers with a farm permit who are under 16 years old are not allowed non-sibling passengers, and farm permit drivers who are at least 16 years old are not allowed more than one non-familial minor passenger for the first six months of the permit period. HB 3191 would allow drivers with an intermediate license to drive with an unlimited number of passengers and remove the six-month delay for passenger allowances for drivers with a farm permit. Repeal of these safety restrictions would be deadly and dangerous. The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety's (IIHS) GDL Crash Reduction Calculator estimates that without the existing restriction on passengers for GDL drivers, fatal crashes would increase by seven percent and total collision claims by five percent in Oklahoma.<sup>i</sup> The research-driven best practice is to prohibit *any* non-familial teen passengers from riding with a teen driver without adult supervision. Fatal crash rates are 21 percent lower for 15- to 17-year-old drivers when prohibited from having any teenage passengers in their vehicles, compared to when two or more passengers were permitted.<sup>ii</sup> While Oklahoma does not adhere to the best practice, HB 3191 would further weaken the restriction and increase the danger on roads.

Teenagers drive less than all but the oldest drivers, yet their number of crashes and crash deaths are disproportionately high.<sup>iii</sup> Per mile driven, teen drivers have crash rates nearly four times higher than drivers aged 20 and older.<sup>iv</sup> In Oklahoma, drivers under 21 years old accounted for 10 percent of drivers involved in fatal crashes in 2022 and 14 percent more were involved in fatal crashes than in 2013.<sup>v</sup> According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), teens are more likely to misjudge dangerous situations or to not be able to recognize hazardous situations.<sup>vi</sup> Teens tend to speed, follow too closely, and underestimate speed and stopping distances.<sup>vii</sup> Moreover, teens and young adults 16-24 years in age have lower seat belt use compared with all other adults.<sup>viii</sup>

In addition to preventing fatalities and injuries, GDL laws save states money. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) estimated the economic cost of police-reported crashes involving drivers between 15 and 20 years old in the U.S. was \$40.8 billion in 2002.<sup>ix</sup> When adjusted for inflation, that amounts to

\$71.1 billion in 2024 dollars.<sup>x</sup> The annual cost of traffic crashes in Oklahoma are over \$3.4 billion – amounting to a “crash tax” of \$864 on each Oklahoman according to a 2019 analysis.<sup>xi</sup>

In 2022, 710 people lost their lives on Oklahoma roads.<sup>xii</sup> Traffic safety is a serious issue that requires improvement rather than the weakening of the state’s GDL law. We urge you to reject HB 3191. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Catherine Chase, President

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- i IIHS. GDL Crash Reduction Calculator available at: <https://www.iihs.org/topics/teenagers/gdl-calculator>.
  - ii Graduated Licensing Laws and Fatal Crashes of Teenage Drivers: A National Study, IIHS, June 2010, available at <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/20544567/>.
  - iii Insurance Institute for Highway Safety. 2013. [Unpublished analysis of 2008 data from the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Household Travel Survey, General Estimates System, and Fatality Analysis Reporting System].
  - iv Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS), Teenagers, available at <https://www.iihs.org/topics/teenagers#by-the-numbers>.
  - v State Traffic Safety Information for Oklahoma (2022), NHTSA, available at <https://cdan.dot.gov/stsi.htm#>.
  - vi CDC, Teen Drivers and Passengers: Get the Facts, available at [https://www.cdc.gov/transportationsafety/teen\\_drivers/teendrivers\\_factsheet.html](https://www.cdc.gov/transportationsafety/teen_drivers/teendrivers_factsheet.html).
  - vii *Ibid.*
  - viii Occupant restraint use in 2022: Results from the NOPUS Controlled Intersection Study (Report No. DOT HS 813 523). NHTSA, available [here](#).
  - ix Traffic Safety Facts 2002: Young Drivers, NHTSA, DOT HS 809 619, available at <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/809619>.
  - x CPI Inflation Calculator, US Bureau of Labor Statistics, <https://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpicalc.pl>; Based on Jan. 2002 to Jan. 2024 value.
  - xi The Economic and Societal Impact of Motor Vehicle Crashes, 2019, NHTSA, Feb. 2023, DOT HS 813 403, available at <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813403>.
  - xii NHTSA. (2024). Overview of Motor Vehicle Crashes in 2022. U.S. Department of Transportation, available [here](#).