ADVOCATES
FOR HIGHWAY
& AUTO SAFETY

January 14, 2026

The Honorable Leo Biasiucci, Chair
The Honorable Teresa Martinez, Vice Chair
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
Arizona House of Representatives
1700 West Washington Street
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

Dear Chair Biasiucci and Vice Chair Martinez:

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) 2003. This measure will reduce the minimum age for instruction permits by six months to 15 years old. In doing so, it will erode the graduated driver licensing (GDL) law and threaten the safety of novice teen drivers and all who share the roads with them.

Traffic fatalities in Arizona have increased over the past decade. In 2024, there were an overall estimated 1,250[1] traffic fatalities in Arizona according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), which is a 39 percent increase since 2015.[2] Fatal crashes involving drivers ages 15-20 went up 119 percent from 2014 to 2023.[3] Especially considering this deadly upturn, the state's GDL law should be improved rather than weakened.

Teenagers drive less than all but the oldest drivers, yet their number of crashes and crash deaths are disproportionately high.[4] Per mile driven, teen drivers have crash rates nearly four times higher than drivers aged 20 and older.[5] 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. Teens tend to speed, follow too closely, and underestimate speed and stopping distances. Moreover, compared with other age groups, teens have the lowest rate of seat belt use.

In addition to preventing fatalities and injuries, GDL laws save states money. The 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.[6] When adjusted for inflation, that amounts to $73.2 billion in 2025 dollars.[7]

Enacting HB 2003 will make Arizona roads more dangerous. The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety's (IIHS) GDL Crash Reduction Calculator estimates that if Arizona reduces the instruction permit age from 15 ½ to 15, fatal crashes would increase by seven percent and total collision claims by two percent among novice drivers.[8]

Conversely, we support the provisions of HB 2003 which increase the length of time an instruction permit must be held before a driver can be eligible for a class G (intermediate) license. However, we cannot support these changes in a context where the minimum instruction permit age is decreased by six months. Based on IIHS research, the best practices for GDL include a minimum permit age of 16 and a minimum intermediate license age of 17. Delaying the minimum age for obtaining a learner's permit was associated with lower fatal crash rates for 15- to 17-year-olds combined, and a one-year delay (e.g., from age 15 to 16) reduced the fatal crash rate by 13 percent.[9] Rather than exacerbate the dangers associated with teen driving, we urge you to instead consider making these changes and upgrading to primary enforcement of GDL laws to upgrade safety.

With well over 1,000 annual traffic fatalities in Arizona, we urge you to reject HB 2003. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Catherine Chase, President

cc: House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure members

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[1] Traffic Safety Facts: Crash Stats, Early Estimate of Motor Vehicle Traffic Fatalities in 2024, NHTSA, April 2025, DOT HS 813 710, available at https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813710.

[2] State Traffic Safety Information for Arizona, NHTSA, available at https://cdan.dot.gov/stsi.htm.

[3] State Traffic Safety Information for Arizona, NHTSA, available at https://cdan.dot.gov/stsi.htm.

[4] 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].

[5] Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, Teenagers, available at https://www.iihs.org/topics/teenagers#by-the-numbers.

[6] Traffic Safety Facts 2002: Young Drivers, NHTSA, DOT HS 809 619, available at https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/809619.

[7] CPI Inflation Calculator, US Bureau of Labor Statistics, https://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpicalc.pl; Based on Jan. 2002 to Jan. 2025 value.

[8] Insurance Institute for Highway Safety. GDL Crash Reduction Calculator available at: https://www.iihs.org/topics/teenagers/gdl-calculator. Graduated Licensing Laws and Fatal Crashes of Teenage Drivers: A National Study, Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, June 2010, available at https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/20544567/.