



ADVOCATES
FOR HIGHWAY
& AUTO SAFETY

April 6, 2026

The Honorable Robert Manger, Chair
The Honorable Collin Duel, Vice Chair
House Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety Oversight
Oklahoma House of Representatives
2300 N. Lincoln Blvd.,
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73105

Dear Chair Manger and Vice Chair Duel:

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, supports Senate Bill (SB) 1687. This measure would increase the holding period for an intermediate class D license (intermediate license) by requiring novice teen drivers to attain age 18 before getting a full class D license (full license), unless they have taken driver education. In doing so, SB 1687 would strengthen the graduated driver licensing (GDL) law by delaying the ability of these drivers to gain the full license privileges of driving at night and driving unsupervised with multiple non-household teen passengers.

In 2024, there were an overall estimated 642¹ traffic fatalities in Oklahoma according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).² The number of drivers ages 15-20 involved in fatal crashes rose 10 percent from 2014 to 2023 and 19 percent since 2019, prior to the pandemic.³ Solutions are needed such as improving the GDL law.

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 Risk is highest at ages 16-17.⁶ 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.

GDL programs introduce teens to the driving experience gradually by phasing in full driving privileges over time and risk settings. 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 2002.⁷ When adjusted for inflation, that amounts to \$74.9 billion in 2026 dollars.⁸

Seemingly small changes to GDL can have big impacts on safety. 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 A minimum holding period of five to six months reduces fatal crash rates by nine percent; however, extending the holding period to nine months to a year results in a 21 percent reduction.¹⁰ For 16- and 17-year-old drivers, a 15 percent reduction in fatal crash incidence was associated with a limit of no more than one teen passenger for six months or longer, when compared to no passenger limit.¹¹

We urge you to improve safety for novice teen drivers and all who share the roads with them by passing SB 1687. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Catherine Chase, President

cc: House Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety Oversight 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 Oklahoma, NHTSA, available at <https://cdan.dot.gov/stsi.htm>.
- ³ State Traffic Safety Information for Oklahoma, 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 Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, Fatality Facts 2023: Teenagers website, available at <https://www.iihs.org/topics/fatalitystatistics/detail/teenagers>.
- ⁷ Traffic Safety Facts 2002: Young Drivers, NHTSA, DOT HS 809 619, available [here](#).
- ⁸ CPI Inflation Calculator, US Bureau of Labor Statistics, <https://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpicalc.pl>; Based on Jan. 2002 to Jan. 2026 value.
- ⁹ 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/>.
- ¹⁰ Masten, S.V., Fodd, R.D., Marshall, S.W., Graduated driver licensing program component calibrations and their association with fatal crash involvement, *Accident Analysis & Prevention*, V. 57, Aug. 2013, pp. 105-113, available at <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/23672925/>.
- ¹¹ Masten, S.V., Fodd, R.D., Marshall, S.W., Graduated driver licensing program component calibrations and their association with fatal crash involvement, *Accident Analysis & Prevention*, V. 57, Aug. 2013, pp. 105-113, available at <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/23672925/>.