



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
869 PUNCHBOWL STREET
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-5097

IN REPLY REFER TO:

(February 1, 2010)

TESTIMONY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

HOUSE BILL NO. 2404

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

The Department of Transportation supports this bill because it makes the statutory requirements for provisional driver's licenses for those under the age of 18 permanent.

The purpose of provisional licensing when passed by the 2005 Legislature under Act 72, was to improve traffic safety by establishing a driver licensing program consisting of a graduated driver licensing in three stages for persons under the age of 18. Prior to its effective date on January 9, 2006, teen drivers under the age of 18 comprised of 3.4 percent of licensed drivers. Although this age group of drivers is a small percentage of the total drivers in Hawaii, they represented 10 percent of all drivers involved in collisions.

Since the new driver licensing system went into effect, the number of 16-year olds with driver license declined 18 percent (less than 500 drivers). The number of crashes associated with this age group decreased 27 percent (66 fewer crashes involving 16 year olds) and another 14 percent of 17 year olds (52 fewer crashes). Another significant change has been the number of evening collisions involving this age group. Because of the restrictions imposed between 11:00 PM and 5:00 AM, there have been 19 fewer crashes at night involving 16 year olds and 17 fewer crashes involving multiple minor-aged passengers each year.

The most important change that we have seen, has been the number of deaths among teens. There was a 60 percent reduction in fatalities involving 16 year olds (5, down to 2 deaths) from the pre-GDL compared with the post-GDL period. There was a similar reduction involving 17 year olds during this same period (10, down to 4 deaths).

DEPARTMENT OF CUSTOMER SERVICES
CITY & COUNTY OF HONOLULU
DIVISION OF MOTOR VEHICLE, LICENSING AND PERMITS
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MUFI HANNEMANN
MAYOR



GAIL Y. HARAGUCHI
DIRECTOR

DENNIS A KAMIMURA
LICENSING ADMINISTRATOR

January 29, 2010

The Honorable Joseph M. Souki, Chair
and Committee Members
Committee on Transportation
House of Representatives
State of Hawaii
State Capitol, Room 403
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Souki and Committee Members:

Subject: H.B. No. 2404, Relating to Driver Licensing

The City and County of Honolulu is in favor of H.B. No. 2404 which will make the graduated licensing program permanent.

Our driver licensing examiners have found that the completion of the requirements of the graduated licensing program have resulted in more confident, knowledgeable, and experienced minors being administered the road tests, as compared to minor applicants before the program was implemented in January 2006.

The City and County of Honolulu urges your favorable action on H.B. No. 2404.

Sincerely,


for  Gail Y. Haraguchi
Director



Mothers Against Drunk Driving HAWAII
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February 1, 2010

To: Representative Joseph M. Souki, Chair – House Committee on Transportation;
Representative Karen Leinani Awana, Vice Chair; and members of the committee

From: Carol McNamee - Public Policy Committee, MADD Hawaii

Re: House Bill 2404 – Relating to Driver Licensing

I am Carol McNamee, testifying on behalf of the Hawaii members of Mothers Against Drunk Driving, in strong support of HB 2404, relating to driver licensing. This bill amends Act 72 of the 2005 legislative session which established a graduated driver's license system in Hawaii. HB 2404 removes the clause which will repeal the Act on January 9, 2011.

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death and injury among teenagers, and crash risk is highest among the most inexperienced teens. According to the CDC, drivers 16 years of age experience crashes almost three times as often as more experienced drivers aged 18 to 19 years. The crash risk for young drivers is greatest at night, and also increases when teenage passengers are in the car. Graduated Drivers' Licensing (GDL) laws address the high risks faced by new drivers by allowing them to get their initial driving experience under low risk conditions.

Evaluations of Graduated Drivers Licensing programs in the United States, Canada, and New Zealand have consistently found that GDL reduces the crash risk among teen and other inexperienced drivers. GDL appears to work both by reducing the amount of driving by an inexperienced driver and by improving driving skills under low risk conditions.

Data reported by the Department of Health shows that Hawaii is no exception to the national and international findings about GDL reducing crashes among teen drivers. First, it appears that teens are waiting longer to obtain a driver's license. The number of 16 year-olds with driver's licenses has declined 18% after the implementation of GDL, from an average of nearly 2,900 to less than 2,400.

Secondly, Hawaii's teen crashes have been reduced. GDL was associated with a 27% decrease in proportion of 16 year-olds among drivers involved in major traffic crashes and a 17% decrease in the proportion of 17 year old drivers in crashes.

Third, the number of 16 year-old drivers who were involved in fatal traffic crashes decreased from 5 over the pre-GDL period of 2003-2005 to only 2 during the post-GDL period of 2006-2008. There was a similar reduction in the number of 17 year-old drivers involved in fatal crashes from 10 (pre-GDL) to 4 (post-GDL).

In a national study released in 2006, graduated driver licensing programs reduce the incidence of fatal crashes of 16-year-old drivers by an average of 11 percent. (*Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health's Center for Injury Research and Policy and the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine*.)^{*} When examining the most comprehensive programs, which include at least five of seven components, the researchers found about a 20 percent reduction in fatal crashes involving 16-year-old drivers. The seven components are:

- *A minimum age of 15 1/2 for obtaining a learner permit*
- *A waiting period after obtaining a learner permit of at least 3 months before applying for an intermediate license*
- *A minimum of 30 hours of supervised driving*
- *Minimum age of at least 16 years for obtaining an intermediate state license*
- *Minimum age of at least 17 years for full licensing*
- *A nighttime driving restriction*
- *A restriction on carrying passengers*

Hawaii's GDL law includes six of the seven components on the list making it one of the stronger laws in the country.

Both national research and the Department of Health report of Hawaii's experience after implementing a GDL law in 2006 support the success of the three stage drivers licensing program for new teen drivers. Therefore, MADD strongly supports the continuation of our law through the passage of HB 2404.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

^{*}The report was supported primarily by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and in part by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

From: Carolyn Fujioka [carolyn.fujioka.atxn@statefarm.com]
Sent: Friday, January 29, 2010 2:52 PM
To: TRNtestimony
Subject: HB 2404 Mon. Feb. 1- 9 am

Testimony to the House Committee on Transportation

Monday, Feb. 1, 2010 9:00 a.m.

Conference Room 309, State Capitol

Re: HB 2404 Relating to Driver Licensing

Chair Souki, Vice Chair Awana and committee members:

I am Carolyn Fujioka on behalf of State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Company. **State Farm supports HB 2404.**

Currently enacted in 45 states and the District of Columbia, Graduated Licensing laws have been highly successful in reducing the crash rate of young drivers.

As stated in the National Safety Council 2007 GDL Symposium, studies estimate that states with strong GDL laws experience a reduction in the number of crashes involving teen drivers of 20% to 30%. A June 2006 study by John Hopkins University found that those states with comprehensive GDL laws that included nighttime and passenger restrictions showed up to a 20% decrease in fatalities among 16-year-old drivers.

Safety advocates and public policymakers have expressed a growing concern regarding the use of electronic communication devices by inexperienced drivers while operating vehicles. One of the five optimal provisions in GDL statutes is prohibiting the use of electronic communication devices while driving during the learners or provisional licensing stages. Learning to drive requires focus and concentration. Even experienced drivers are affected by the distraction of using a cell phone and similar devices. Ford Motor Company research shows that teen drivers are more than four times more distracted by the use of cell phones and similar devices than adult drivers. Noting that existing state laws do not go far enough to protect young drivers from hazards of distracted driving, the National Transportation Safety Board called for states to enact bans on the use of interactive wireless communication devices for all novice or provisional drivers under the age of 18.

The distraction to teen drivers created by electronic devices is of particular concern simply because of their widespread, constant use by teens. According to a recent study by The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, 48% of teen drivers admit to talking on the phone while driving. Fifty-three percent report seeing their peers use another kind of handheld device, such as text messaging device, MP3 player, or game, while driving.

State Farm believes it is appropriate to adopt stricter regulations for beginning drivers and urges you to amend the current GDL law with a provision that drivers under 18 years of age shall not operate any interactive wireless communication devices while driving a motor vehicle.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 2404.