



Jesse White

SECRETARY OF STATE

NEWS

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Three New Laws Initiated By White Will Take Effect January 1 *Stronger Teen Driving Laws; Online Access for Parents to View Teen Driving Records; Penalties for Falsifying Military Service*

Three important pieces of legislation initiated this year by Secretary of State Jesse White will take effect as new laws January 1st and include measures that enhance teen driving safety laws, give parents online access to teen driving records, and make it a crime to falsify one's military service for special military license plates.

"These new laws will make the roads safer for all of us, especially teen drivers, and will save lives," White said. "In addition, anyone found guilty of falsifying his or her military service to obtain special license plates designated only for military service personal will be charged with a crime. I want to thank Governor Blagojevich and the General Assembly for their assistance in addressing these important public health and safety issues."

White said the first two measures would lead directly to safer roads and more lives being saved each year through strengthening of Illinois' graduated driver licensing (GDL) program and increasing parental involvement in the driving patterns of teen drivers. The third measure protects the sanctity of special license plates designated only for military service personnel. All three measures received strong support from the Illinois General Assembly.

Public Act 95-0310 (SB 172) makes Illinois' GDL program, which governs drivers up to the age of 21, one of the best in the nation. The new law is based on recommendations made by White's Teen Driver Safety Task Force, composed of legislators, traffic safety experts, law enforcement officials, educators, judges and victim advocates.

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for people ages 15 to 20. In fact, teens make up just 6.3 percent of the driving population, yet account for 12.6 percent of fatal crashes. Several recent studies have shown that comprehensive GDL programs greatly reduce traffic crashes and fatalities involving teen drivers.

The new law gives teens more time to obtain valuable driving experience while under the watchful eye of a parent or guardian, limits in-car distractions, and requires teens to earn their way from one stage to the next by avoiding traffic convictions.

"This law will not only make Illinois' teen driver program one of the strongest in the nation, but more importantly, it will save lives," White said. "Over the last two years I've worked hard with my Teen Driver Safety Task Force to create legislation that better prepares new teen drivers and helps to prevent vehicle crashes, the leading cause of death for young people."

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Leading national traffic safety experts have lauded the new law as one that will save lives. According to a study conducted by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, this new law could reduce fatal traffic crashes involving 16-year-old drivers by 38 percent.

Public Act 95-0201 (HB 518) will allow parents or guardians access to the driving records of their teenagers (under age 18) for free via the internet at www.CyberdriveIllinois.com.

“By giving parents access to these driving records, we are giving them an additional tool to help keep them more involved in their teenagers’ driving patterns as they proceed through the graduated driver licensing program,” White said. “Parental involvement is critical for any GDL program to be successful, and this new law will help achieve that end.”

White’s office has worked to develop tight security features that will safeguard the privacy of teens by ensuring only their parents or approved guardians will be able to gain online access to their driving records.

Public Act PA 95-0291 (HB 362) makes it a crime to falsify one’s military service in order to receive special license plates designated for military service personnel. Those who are found guilty face a Class A misdemeanor – punishable up to one year in jail and up to \$2,500 in fines – with the minimum fine being \$1,000.

"Our military service men and women are heroes who put their lives on the line for our country," White said. "For someone to lie about either serving or receiving honors is offensive and disrespectful. This new law says we will not stand for this deceit."

The funds collected from the fines will be deposited into the Illinois Military Family Relief Fund.

Currently the license plates that are available to service personnel include Disabled Veterans, POW, National Guard, Armed Forces Reserves, Purple Heart, Retired Armed Forces, Pearl Harbor and Gold Star. There is no extra charge for a vanity or personalized plate in these categories.

In addition, people who provide false information on their vehicle title or registration in order to obtain a license plate will also face a Class A misdemeanor with a minimum \$500 fine.

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