



# Jesse White

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## SECRETARY OF STATE

# NEWS

**For Immediate Release:**  
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### **Jesse White Receives National Award Recognizing Efforts on Teen Driver Safety**

Secretary of State Jesse White was honored today with a Public Service Award from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) for the leadership role his office has played to strengthen Illinois' graduated driver licensing (GDL) program and reduce teen driving crashes and fatalities.

White received the award at the 25<sup>th</sup> annual National Lifesavers Conference held this year in Chicago. The goal of the conference, which draws a variety of traffic safety organizations and advocates from throughout the nation, is to combat traffic crash fatalities and injuries. Approximately 2,500 people attended this year's conference.

"I am honored to receive the Public Service Award from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration," said White. "This award is recognition that my office is doing everything it can to reduce teen driver deaths and injuries."

Last summer Secretary White established the Teen Driver Safety Task Force to examine and propose legislation to strengthen Illinois' GDL program in a manner that enhances the safety of young, novice drivers and reduces teen fatal crashes. Several recent studies have shown that comprehensive GDL programs significantly reduce traffic crashes and fatalities involving teen drivers.

Using the Task Force's final recommendations as a blueprint, White's office drafted Senate Bill 172. Highlights of the legislation include giving teens more time to obtain valuable driving experience while under the watchful eye of a parent or guardian, limiting in-car distractions, and requiring the teens to earn their way from one stage to the next by avoiding traffic convictions. This proposal has received widespread acclaim from leading state and national traffic safety organizations who believe the legislation will make Illinois' GDL program one of the best in the nation.

"Traffic crashes are the leading cause of death among adolescents," said White. "We owe it to our young people and their families to address this serious problem in a meaningful way. That is why I am so proud of the work of my Teen Driver Safety Task Force and Senate Bill 172."

Senate Bill 172, sponsored by Senator John Cullerton, unanimously passed the Senate Transportation Committee on March 1<sup>st</sup> and awaits consideration of the full Senate.

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