



# Jesse White

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## SECRETARY OF STATE

# NEWS

### **For Immediate Release:**

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### **Governor Signs White's Initiative Requiring Increased Training For Teen Drivers**

Legislation initiated by Secretary of State Jesse White, State Rep. John D'Amico (D-15) and State Senator John Cullerton (D-6) to strengthen the Illinois Graduated Drivers License (GDL) program by doubling the practice time young drivers will need to obtain an Illinois driver's license was signed into law today by Governor Rod Blagojevich.

"I want to commend Governor Blagojevich and the members of the General Assembly for helping establish this new law that will undoubtedly save the lives of more young drivers," said White. "Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for people age 15 to 20. I believe this proposal will help give our young people more experience behind the wheel, in a variety of situations, helping them to become better, safer drivers."

House Bill 4768 requires parents to spend 50 hours with their child in the car, including 10 hours of night driving, before the young person is eligible for an Illinois driver's license. In addition, parents must sign a consent form before the teen may apply for a driver's license. Illinois law previously required parents to spend 25 hours with the teen driver behind the wheel.

"Defensive driving means that even if you're doing everything right, you still have to worry about everyone else on the road. And there's probably no group of drivers on the road that worry the rest of us more than teenage drivers. Driving is about instinct. It's about experience. And when you first start driving, those are two things you just don't have. The bill I'm signing today will help make sure that teenage drivers are better trained and more experienced, and that should make the roads safer for all of us," said Governor Blagojevich.

The law takes effect immediately and White filed rules today that govern the new program. Any teen that has already been issued a permit will still be required to complete 25 practice hours with a parent before becoming eligible to receive a driver's license. Any teen that has yet to be issued a permit will fall under the new law requiring 50 hours for practice time, including 10 practice hours at night. The new law also requires that the parental consent form be signed in person at a Secretary of State Driver Services facility or signed and notarized if the parent cannot accompany the teen to the driving exam.

"This is a common-sense approach to ensure that young people become better trained, more-experienced drivers," D'Amico said. "It should help reduce the number of crashes that tragically injure and kill too many of our young drivers each year."

"I'm pleased to have had the opportunity to help Secretary White create another sensible law that will better prepare and protect our young drivers," said Cullerton. "The additional training required under this law will ultimately make the roads of Illinois safer for all motorists."

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA):

- In 2004, 3,620 drivers 15 to 20 years old were killed and an additional 303,000 were injured in motor vehicle crashes nationally
- Young drivers are twice as likely as adult drivers to be in a fatal crash.
- The factors contributing to these higher crash rates include lack of driving experience and inadequate driving skills; excessive driving during night-time, higher-risk hours; risk-taking behavior; poor driving judgment and decision-making; drinking and driving; and distractions from teenage passengers.

The new law was supported by the NHTSA, Illinois Traffic Safety Leaders (ITSL), Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), Alliance Against Intoxicated Motorists (AAIM), and the Illinois High School and College Driver Education Association (IHSCDEA).

“We commend Secretary of State Jesse White for strengthening Illinois’ GDL law by requiring additional hours behind the wheel including nighttime hours,” said Mike Witter, NHTSA Deputy Regional Administrator. “The new law will better prepare young drivers and improve road safety for all motorists in Illinois.”

Illinois joins 18 other states that require at least 50 hours with a parent in the car, including California, Florida, Michigan and Ohio.

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