



# Jesse White

---

## SECRETARY OF STATE

# NEWS

**For Immediate Release:**

October 30, 2006

**For More Information Contact:**

Randy Nehrt

### **Jesse White Urges State Board of Education To Restore Driver Education Positions**

Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White today urged the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) to restore all positions directly related to driver education programs.

“I would like to strongly encourage the Illinois State Board of Education to restore all positions in the agency that deal directly with driver education,” White said. “I would request that this be done as soon as possible to restore the proper oversight of driver education programs in Illinois.

“I’m aware that the ISBE Finance and Audit Committee is currently conducting fiscal year 2008 budget hearings throughout the state to establish priorities for next year’s budget. I believe restoring these positions should be a top priority.”

White said he learned while chairing meetings of his Teen Driver Safety Task Force, that the ISBE had not filled any of the positions that monitor driver education that had become vacant over the last several years. White further learned that all of the positions within ISBE responsible for monitoring driver education in Illinois had been abolished. In addition, the Illinois High School & College Driver Education Association testified at the hearings that that the driver education curriculum in Illinois has not been updated in decades.

“Driver education plays a vital role in the lives of our state’s most precious resource – our children,” White said. “Unfortunately, far too many young people are killed in automobile crashes before they ever have an opportunity to fulfill their aspirations. Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for people age 15 to 20.

“We need to do everything within our power to ensure that our children receive the very best driver education possible so they may become safe and responsible drivers. That is why I am encouraging the ISBE to restore all the positions that work on issues directly related to driver education and the safety of our young, novice drivers.”

White created the Teen Driver Safety Task Force to develop legislation to strengthen the Illinois GDL law in a manner that enhances the safety of young, novice drivers and reduces fatal crashes involving teen drivers. The task force – comprised of legislators, traffic safety experts, law enforcement officials, educators and judges – recently held public hearings in Springfield, Carterville and Chicago to examine potential changes to the state’s current GDL program. White’s office is preparing legislative recommendations based on the committee’s findings.

A recent study released by Johns Hopkins’ Bloomberg School of Public Health showed that GDL programs reduce by an average of 11 percent the incidence of fatal crashes among 16-year-old drivers. It also indicated that the most comprehensive programs reduce fatal crashes involving 16 year-olds up to 21 percent.

###