



Jesse White

SECRETARY OF STATE

NEWS

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Jesse White's Teen Driver Safety Task Force Meets In Springfield *First of three statewide public hearings*

Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White's Teen Driver Safety Task Force met today for the first of three statewide public hearings to examine teen driving laws and propose legislation aimed at reducing teen traffic fatalities.

"Recent studies have shown that the most comprehensive Graduated Driver License programs can reduce traffic fatalities for 16-year-old drivers by as much as 21 percent," White said. "Although our program already contains many of the components that are believed to reduce traffic fatalities for these young drivers, we want to make sure that we take every reasonable step possible to save more lives. These young people are our future leaders and we want to protect them so they have the opportunity to grow up and fulfill their aspirations."

The task force, comprised of legislators, traffic safety experts, law enforcement officials, educators and judges will also hold public hearings in Carbondale and Chicago. Members of the committee examined Illinois' Graduated Driver License (GDL) law, other state's programs and recent studies that have concluded comprehensive GDL programs reduce teen traffic fatalities. The group also studied proposals from various traffic safety organizations to improve teen driving laws.

The mission of the task force is 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.

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.

"Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for people age 15 to 20," White said. "About 1,000 16-year-old drivers are involved in fatal crashes in the United States each year. I look forward to working with the members of this task force to enhance our GDL program so that we can further reduce traffic fatalities involving young drivers in Illinois."

GDL programs are designed to delay full driving privileges while allowing beginning drivers to obtain their initial experience under low-risk conditions. There are three stages: a supervised learner's period, an intermediate license that limits unsupervised driving in high-risk situations and a full-privilege driver's license available after completion of the first two stages.

More information about the task force, GDL programs and a summary of the current Illinois GDL law can be found on Secretary of State Jesse White's website, www.cyberdriveillinois.com.

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