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Jesse White's Two Key Traffic Safety Legislative Initiatives Approved by House
HB 1009 strengthens the GDL program; HB1010 further restricts the issuance of court supervision

Two important traffic safety legislative measures proposed by Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White were approved by the Illinois House of Representatives. The legislation now goes to the Senate for its consideration.

The first measure, House Bill 1009, seeks to prohibit the issuance of a graduated driver's license (GDL) to a driver under 18 that has an unresolved traffic citation. The legislation – named Kelsey's Law in honor of Kelsey Little – also allows White's office to cancel a GDL if it is determined that at the time of issuance the minor had a traffic citation for which a disposition had not been rendered. Under current law, a GDL applicant is not required to report any pending traffic citations.

"One of my top priorities as Secretary of State has been to continually strengthen our state's heralded GDL program," said White. "Since we implemented one of the nation's most comprehensive GDL laws in the nation in 2008, teen driving fatalities have dropped by 50 percent. But even the best programs can be made better, and this legislation will help strengthen our state's GDL program, and hopefully save even more lives."

House Bill 1009 is named in honor of 15-year-old Kelsey Little, who in 2011 was seriously injured in an automobile crash by a young driver operating on a learner's permit. The driver was issued a traffic citation for the incident, of which the Secretary of State's office was unaware due to the lack of a reporting requirement. Three days later the teen driver applied for and was issued a driver's license.

The second measure, House bill 1010, seeks to prohibit the issuance of court supervision for drivers involved in fatal crashes. The legislation – named Patricia's Law in honor of Patricia McNamara who was killed in an automobile crash in which the driver received court supervision – will ensure that drivers involved in fatal crashes are ineligible for court supervision.

"My mission as Secretary of State is to make the roads of Illinois as safe as possible," said White. "Since I took office in 1999, I have continually worked to improve traffic safety laws, particularly those laws involving court supervision. This is an important next step, and one that makes sense. The issuance of court supervision for a driver involved in a fatal crash should not be an option."

House Bill 1010 originates from White's Advisory Committee on Traffic Safety, which unanimously supported the measure at a meeting last September. Under current law, drivers involved in fatal crashes may seek and obtain court supervision.

Both House Bills 1009 and 1010 were sponsored by state Rep. John D'Amico (D-Chicago).

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