

# ENERGY, TRANSPORTATION, AND ENVIRONMENT

Resolution ETE-18-39

## A RESOLUTION URGING STATES TO TAKE STEPS TO INCREASE DRIVER SAFETY

WHEREAS, motor vehicle crashes are a leading cause of death and injury and data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) showed 35,092 people were killed in motor vehicle crashes in 2015, a seven percent increase over 2014 and the largest percentage increase in nearly 50 years, and estimates for 2016 show the number of fatalities rising to over 40,000;

WHEREAS, in addition in 2015, more than 2.4 million people were injured in nearly 6.3 million police-reported motor vehicle crashes;

WHEREAS, an average of nearly 100 people died each day in motor vehicle crashes in 2015, an average of one fatality every 15 minutes;

WHEREAS, NHTSA data show increases in fatalities for every crash category, including unbelted vehicle occupants (five percent), child passengers (six percent), distracted drivers (nine percent), and teen drivers (10 percent);

WHEREAS, motor vehicle crashes impose significant human and economic costs on our families, communities, and states, which can be mitigated with cost-effective and lifesaving solutions;

WHEREAS, seat belts are one of the most effective ways to save lives however, 2015 NHTSA data show that among passenger vehicle occupant fatalities, 48 percent were not wearing seat belts, moreover nationwide seat belts saved an estimated 13,941 lives of passengers age five and older in all seating positions, and that an additional 2,804 lives could have been saved if all passenger vehicle occupants had worn seat belts;

WHEREAS, in 2015 according to NHTSA there were 3,477 people killed and 391,000 more injured in crashes involving a distracted driver;

WHEREAS, Teen drivers are far more likely than other drivers to be involved in fatal crashes because they lack driving experience and tend to take greater risks;

WHEREAS, According to NHTSA, in 2015 more than 4,700 people were killed in crashes involving young drivers (age 15 - 20);

WHEREAS, Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) programs introduce teens to the driving experience gradually by phasing in full driving privileges over time with important restrictions on

# ENERGY, TRANSPORTATION, AND ENVIRONMENT

## Resolution ETE-18-39

the number of teen passengers, cell phone use and nighttime driving that result in a lower risk setting and studies have shown that GDL laws have been effective in reducing teen crash deaths;

WHEREAS, motor vehicle crashes are a leading cause of death for children age five to 14 and an average of three children under age 14 were killed and nearly 500 were injured every day in motor vehicle crashes in the U.S. in 2015 – amounting to a total of 1,132 fatalities and 178,000 others injured;

WHEREAS, according to NHTSA, when used properly, child safety seats certified by the manufacturer to meet U.S. DOT safety standards reduce fatal injury by 71 percent for infants and 54 percent for toddlers in passenger cars, and across all age groups, injury risk is lowest (less than two percent) when children are placed in an age-appropriate restraint in the rear seat;

WHEREAS, 42 states and District of Columbia do not require infants to be kept in rear-facing seats until age two, and 39 states do not require children to remain in booster seats until age eight and a height of 57 inches; and

WHEREAS, the National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL) seeks to identify and elevate traffic safety to an urgent legislative priority in order to address this costly public health and safety epidemic caused by motor vehicle crashes, deaths and injuries.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL) urges adoption of traffic safety laws to reduce crashes, save lives, reduce injuries and contain costs;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NBCSL urges adoption of all-driver text messaging bans that prohibit other portable electronic communication device uses while driving such as posting to social media sites and playing games;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NBCSL urges adoption of comprehensive GDL programs to address the safety of novice teen drivers and those who share the roads. Specifically, the adoption of the recommended minimum provisions in a GDL law provided below:

1. All vehicle occupants must use seat belts.
2. A young driver shall not operate any interactive wireless communication device while driving until reaching 18 years of age.

# ENERGY, TRANSPORTATION, AND ENVIRONMENT

## Resolution ETE-18-39

### Learner Permit or Instructional Phase

1. Minimum age 16 with parent or legal guardian's consent.
2. The permit holder must pass all courses, such as basic driver training, behind-the-wheel training, written exams, and vision screening test.
3. The permit holder must be accompanied by a parent/guardian or other adult at least 21 years of age and duly licensed to drive in the state.
4. The supervisor shall be the only other passenger in the front seat with the driver.
5. Parent/guardian must certify at least 50 hours of supervised driving with a duly licensed adult at least 21 years of age, ten of those at night.
6. This stage should last a minimum of 6 months, during which time the new driver must maintain a conviction-free driving record and shall not have violated any alcohol, drug or driver-related safety laws.
7. Zero blood alcohol concentration at all times.
8. Failure to meet all of these conditions will trigger the learner permit stage to start over again.
9. The driver should pass a road test before progressing to the next phase.
10. The appearance of the permit must be distinctively different from the provisional license and the regular license.

### Provisional or Intermediate Phase

1. Age range 16-18. The driver should be free of at-fault crashes for at least 6 months before progressing to the next phase.
2. The driver cannot drive during night hours, e.g., 10:00 PM to 5:00 AM, unless accompanied by an adult over 21 years of age and duly licensed in the state.
3. When driving without supervision, there may be no passenger who is under age 19 for the first 6 months and no more than one passenger under age 19 for the second 6 months.
4. Continued maintenance of alcohol-free and conviction-free driving record and seat belt usage.
5. Minimum period in this stage is 12 months.
6. Failure to meet these conditions shall result in restarting the intermediate/probationary license phase.
7. The appearance of this license should be distinctively different from the learner's permit and the regular license.

# ENERGY, TRANSPORTATION, AND ENVIRONMENT

Resolution ETE-18-39

## Regular License

1. Establish a probationary period if under age 18, during which time there can be no more than one ticket or accident, where the driver is not at fault
2. Pass the final road test.
3. Otherwise, full privileges and, except for the wireless communication device restriction, there shall be no restrictions after completion of first two stages.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NBCSL urges adoption of state laws to require children remain in rear facing safety seats through age two, and booster seat laws requiring children remain in a booster seat until age eight and 57 inches;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NBCSL supports enactment of the aforementioned state traffic safety laws to prevent crashes, save lives, reduce injuries and curb costs; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States, the Vice- President of the United States, members of the U.S. Congress, and other federal and state officials as appropriate.

**SPONSOR: Representative Bobby B. DuBose (FL)**

**Committee of Jurisdiction: Energy, Transportation, and Environment Policy Committee**

**Certified by Committee Chair(s): Representative Billy Mitchell (GA) and Representative Cherrish Pryor (IN)**

**Ratified in Plenary Session: Ratification Date is December 2, 2017**

**Ratification is certified by: Representative Gregory W. Porter (IN), President**