

SB 2449



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IN REPLY REFER TO:

**STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
869 PUNCHBOWL STREET
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-5097**

(February 1, 2010)

TESTIMONY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

SENATE BILL NO. 2449

**COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION, INTERNATIONAL AND
INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS**

The Department of Transportation supports this bill because it makes the statutory requirements for provisional driver's licenses for those under the age of 18 permanent.

The purpose of provisional licensing when passed by the 2005 Legislature under Act 72, was to improve traffic safety by establishing a driver licensing program consisting of a graduated driver licensing in three stages for persons under the age of 18. Prior to its effective date on January 9, 2006, teen drivers under the age of 18 comprised of 3.4 percent of licensed drivers. Although this age group of drivers is a small percentage of the total drivers in Hawaii, they represented 10 percent of all drivers involved in collisions.

Since the new driver licensing system went into effect, the number of 16-year olds with driver license declined 18 percent (less than 500 drivers). The number of crashes associated with this age group decreased 27 percent (66 fewer crashes involving 16 year olds) and another 14 percent of 17 year olds (52 fewer crashes). Another significant change has been the number of evening collisions involving this age group. Because of the restrictions imposed between 11:00 PM and 5:00 AM, there have been 19 fewer crashes at night involving 16 year olds and 17 fewer crashes involving multiple minor-aged passengers each year.

The most important change that we have seen, has been the number of deaths among teens. There was a 60 percent reduction in fatalities involving 16 year olds (5, down to 2 deaths) from the pre-GDL compared with the post-GDL period. There was a similar reduction involving 17 year olds during this same period (10, down to 4 deaths).

DEPARTMENT OF CUSTOMER SERVICES
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DIVISION OF MOTOR VEHICLE, LICENSING AND PERMITS
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MAYOR



GAIL Y. HARAGUCHI
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DENNIS A KAMIMURA
LICENSING ADMINISTRATOR

January 29, 2010

The Honorable J. Kalani English, Chair
and Committee Members
Committee on Transportation, International
and Intergovernmental Affairs
The Senate
State of Hawaii
State Capitol, Room 205
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair English and Committee Members:


Subject: S.B. No. 2449, Relating to Driver Licensing

The City and County of Honolulu is in favor of S.B. No. 2449, which will make the graduated licensing program permanent.

Our driver licensing examiners have found that the completion of the requirements of the graduated licensing program have resulted in more confident, knowledgeable, and experienced minors being administered the road tests, as compared to minor applicants before the program was implemented in January 2006.

The City and County of Honolulu urges your favorable action on S.B. No. 2449.

Sincerely,


Gail Y. Haraguchi
Director

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Transportation, International and Intergovernmental Affairs

Monday, Feb. 1, 2010 1:15 p.m.

Conference Room 224, State Capitol

Re: SB 2449 Relating to Driver Licensing

Chair English, Vice Chair Gabbard and committee members:

I am Carolyn Fujioka on behalf of State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Company. **State Farm supports SB 2449.**

Currently enacted in 45 states and the District of Columbia, Graduated Licensing laws have been highly successful in reducing the crash rate of young drivers.

As stated in the National Safety Council 2007 GDL Symposium, studies estimate that states with strong GDL laws experience a reduction in the number of crashes involving teen drivers of 20% to 30%. A June 2006 study by John Hopkins University found that those states with comprehensive GDL laws that included nighttime and passenger restrictions showed up to a 20% decrease in fatalities among 16-year-old drivers.

Safety advocates and public policymakers have expressed a growing concern regarding the use of electronic communication devices by inexperienced drivers while operating vehicles. One of the five optimal provisions in GDL statutes is prohibiting the use of electronic communication devices while driving during the learners or provisional licensing stages. Learning to drive requires focus and concentration. Even experienced drivers are affected by the distraction of using a cell phone and similar devices. Ford Motor Company research shows that teen drivers are more than four times more distracted by the use of cell phones and similar devices than adult drivers. Noting that existing state laws do not go far enough to protect young drivers from hazards of distracted driving, the National Transportation Safety Board called for states to enact bans on the use of interactive wireless communication devices for all novice or provisional drivers under the age of 18.

The distraction to teen drivers created by electronic devices is of particular concern simply because of their widespread, constant use by teens. According to a recent study by The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, 48% of teen drivers admit to talking on the phone while driving. Fifty-three percent report seeing their peers use another kind of handheld device, such as text messaging device, MP3 player, or game, while driving.

State Farm believes it is appropriate to adopt stricter regulations for beginning drivers and urges you to amend the current GDL law with a provision that drivers under 18 years of age shall not operate any interactive wireless communication devices while driving a motor vehicle.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 2449.

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Friday, January 29, 2010 10:03 AM
To: TIATestimony
Cc: brucewan@htbyb.com
Subject: Testimony for SB2449 on 2/1/2010 1:15:00 PM

Testimony for TIA 2/1/2010 1:15:00 PM SB2449

Conference room: 224
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Bruce McEwan
Organization: Injury Prevention Advisory Committee
Address: P.O. Box 3288 Honolulu, HI
Phone: 808 5439357
E-mail: brucewan@htbyb.com
Submitted on: 1/29/2010

Comments:



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February 1, 2010

To: Senator J. Kalani English, Chair – Senate Committee on Transportation,
International, and Intergovernmental Affairs; Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair;
and members of the committee

From: Carol McNamee - Public Policy Committee, MADD Hawaii

Re: Senate Bill 2449 – Relating to Driver Licensing

I am Carol McNamee, testifying on behalf of the Hawaii members of Mothers Against Drunk Driving, in strong support of SB 2449, relating to driver licensing. This bill amends Act 72 of the 2005 legislative session which established a graduated driver's license system in Hawaii. SB 2449 removes the clause which will repeal the Act on January 9, 2011.

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death and injury among teenagers, and crash risk is highest among the most inexperienced teens. According to the CDC, drivers 16 years of age experience crashes almost three times as often as more experienced drivers aged 18 to 19 years. The crash risk for young drivers is greatest at night, and also increases when teenage passengers are in the car. Graduated Drivers' Licensing (GDL) laws address the high risks faced by new drivers by allowing them to get their initial driving experience under low risk conditions.

Evaluations of Graduated Drivers Licensing programs in the United States, Canada, and New Zealand have consistently found that GDL reduces the crash risk among teen and other inexperienced drivers. GDL appears to work both by reducing the amount of driving by an inexperienced driver and by improving driving skills under low risk conditions.

Data reported by the Department of Health shows that Hawaii is no exception to the national and international findings about GDL reducing crashes among teen drivers. First, it appears that teens are waiting longer to obtain a driver's license. The number of 16 year-olds with driver's licenses has declined 18% after the implementation of GDL, from an average of nearly 2,900 to less than 2,400.

Secondly, Hawaii's teen crashes have been reduced. GDL was associated with a 27% decrease in proportion of 16 year-olds among drivers involved in major traffic crashes and a 17% decrease in the proportion of 17 year old drivers in crashes.

Third, the number of 16 year-old drivers who were involved in fatal traffic crashes decreased from 5 over the pre-GDL period of 2003-2005 to only 2 during the post-GDL period of 2006-2008. There was a similar reduction in the number of 17 year-old drivers involved in fatal crashes from 10 (pre-GDL) to 4 (post-GDL).

In a national study released in 2006, graduated driver licensing programs reduce the incidence of fatal crashes of 16-year-old drivers by an average of 11 percent. (*Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health's Center for Injury Research and Policy and the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine.*)* When examining the most comprehensive programs, which include at least five of seven components, the researchers found about a 20 percent reduction in fatal crashes involving 16-year-old drivers. The seven components are:

- *A minimum age of 15 1/2 for obtaining a learner permit*
- *A waiting period after obtaining a learner permit of at least 3 months before applying for an intermediate license*
- *A minimum of 30 hours of supervised driving*
- *Minimum age of at least 16 years for obtaining an intermediate state license*
- *Minimum age of at least 17 years for full licensing*
- *A nighttime driving restriction*
- *A restriction on carrying passengers*

Hawaii's GDL law includes six of the seven components on the list making it one of the stronger laws in the country.

Both national research and the Department of Health report of Hawaii's experience after implementing a GDL law in 2006 support the success of the three stage drivers licensing program for new teen drivers. Therefore, MADD strongly supports the continuation of our law through the passage of SB 2449.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

*The report was supported primarily by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and in part by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.