



ADVOCATES
for Highway & Auto Safety

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MORE SOLID EVIDENCE FOR PASSAGE OF THE SAFE TEEN AND NOVICE DRIVER UNIFORM PROTECTION ACT ACCORDING TO NEW INSURANCE INSTITUTE FOR HIGHWAY SAFETY STUDY

Broad Coalition of Safety Advocates Calls For Immediate Passage of Legislation in Congress

Washington, D.C. – A new national survey, conducted by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) on the views of parents of 15-18 year olds, reveals astoundingly high levels of support for stronger driving laws, including raising the age for learner’s permits and licenses for beginning teen drivers, and more stringent nighttime driving and passenger restrictions.

The survey asked 1200 parents about the components of state graduated driver licensing programs. As recognized in the IIHS report, the strength of state laws varies widely, and some state laws “haven’t kept pace with the latest research.” Legislation to remedy this situation and establish minimum national standards for graduated driver licensing (GDL) systems, the Safe Teen and Novice Driver Uniform Protection or “STANDUP” Act (H.R.1895 and S.3269), is pending in the U.S. Congress.

“This latest IIHS research is one more crucial reason for immediate adoption of the STANDUP Act in Congress,” said Judith Lee Stone, president of Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety (Advocates), an alliance of consumer and insurance interests pushing for the bill. “We’ve known there is support for improving GDL throughout the states, but now we know just how high those levels of support are among parents who have the most to lose in teen-related crashes.”

Key findings of the survey are:

- Two-thirds of parents surveyed want learner’s permits to be issued starting at age 16, not before [STANDUP calls for 16 as the minimum learner’s permit age.]
- More than half of the parents surveyed think the minimum age for the unsupervised, or intermediate driving phase of GDL should be 17 or older; the same number want the learner’s permit period to last at least a year. [STANDUP would have learner’s permits last for at least six months, then nighttime and passenger restrictions in place during the unsupervised driving period until age 18.]

- 60 percent support supervised driving requirements for new teen drivers of at least 50 hours, with 40 percent saying 100 or more hours. [STANDUP leaves the decision about required supervised driving hours to a U.S.DOT rulemaking.]
- 90 percent of parents want a nighttime driving restriction, most of whom would have it start at 10 pm or earlier. [STANDUP calls for a nighttime restriction but does not specify the hours, also to be determined by rulemaking.]
- 89 percent want passenger restrictions, with the largest majority of those saying teens should be allowed only one non-family passenger [STANDUP calls for one non-familial passenger allowed during the unsupervised phase.]

The IIHS “*Status Report*,” available at (www.iihs.org), summarizes the report findings and states, “As Congress considers a bill to create a national graduated driver licensing system, the Institute’s findings suggest the time is right to strengthen laws aimed at lowering the risks teens face during their early years on the road.”

Authors of the study feel the findings are particularly relevant for the appropriateness of STANDUP in Congress. Anne McCartt, IIHS senior vice president for research, said, “We were surprised at how tough moms and dads said they want the laws to be, and we think parents are ready for upgrades.”

“Lawmakers should take this survey into account as they look to strengthen graduated licensing systems at the state level and as they weigh a bill to create a federal model,” said Allan Williams, the study’s lead author and former head scientist at IIHS. “Findings suggest many parents would accept licensing rules that go beyond the proposed STANDUP Act’s provisions.”

In the U.S. Congress, the lead STANDUP sponsors are Rep. Tim Bishop (D-NY), Rep. Michael Castle (R-DE), Rep. Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), and Senators Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) and Chris Dodd (D-CT). STANDUP is supported by the diverse *Saferoads4teens Coalition* of 150 consumer, safety, law enforcement, insurance and other business organizations, as well as numerous other Congressional co-sponsors.

Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety is a coalition of insurance, consumer, health, safety and law enforcement organizations that work together to advance state and federal highway and vehicle safety laws, programs and policies. More information about the STANDUP Act is available at www.saferoads4teens.org.

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