



THE STOUFFER REPORT

Senator Bill Stouffer
Senate District 21

Capitol Building, Room 332
Jefferson City, MO 65101

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Legislation Affects Teenagers Too

I have been speaking to many schools in the district, and during these visits I was informed many high school students are reading my columns each week. Therefore, this week I wanted to talk about a bill that affects them: graduated driver's license.

Last week the Missouri Senate approved legislation implementing two key revisions to Missouri's graduated driver's license system. Senate Bill 1001 requires more experience behind the wheel for learner's permit applicants and tightens restrictions on the number of young passengers allowed to ride with young drivers.

Senate Bill 1001 revises Missouri's graduated driver's license law by increasing the number of hours applicants must spend behind the wheel before they are allowed to receive a learner's permit. Current law allows Missourians ages 15 and up to apply for a temporary instruction permit, or learner's permit, after completing a minimum of 20 hours of driving instruction. SB 1001 increases that total minimum to 40 hours, with 10 hours of nighttime instruction.

By requiring young people to show they are experienced drivers before allowing them greater independence behind the wheel, we are making our roads safer for Missourians throughout the state.

The legislation also restricts the number of young passengers that can accompany new drivers. Under SB 1001, for the first six months after drivers receive their learner's permit, they may not drive with more than one passenger under age 19 who is not a family member. After the first six months, young drivers may not drive with more than three passengers of that description.

Studies show that young drivers with young passengers in the car are more likely to speed, drive at night, take risks while driving, and be involved in accidents. Of course, what these studies show, while troubling, is basic common sense. The more young people you have in a car, the louder the conversation is going to be and the more distracted the driver will become. Anyone who has spent time with a group of teenagers can tell you that.

So to all the young people of the 21st District, and their parents, I encourage you to consider SB 1001. As a grandfather I realize it may seem a bit more of a hassle to obtain a driver's license, but this legislation just might save your life or the life of someone you love.

If you have questions or comments about this or any other issue, please call toll free (866) 768-3987 or by email at bstouffer@senate.mo.gov.

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