

1 State of Arkansas *As Engrossed: S1/29/15 S3/19/15*

2 90th General Assembly

A Bill

3 Regular Session, 2015

SENATE BILL 49

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5 By: Senators Irvin, G. Stubblefield, Collins-Smith, B. Johnson, Flippo, D. Sanders

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For An Act To Be Entitled

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AN ACT TO ENACT THE ARKANSAS TEEN DRIVER AND PARENTAL

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EDUCATION ACT OF 2015; TO REGULATE DRIVERS LICENSING;

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TO IMPROVE DRIVERS LICENSING PRACTICES AND

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PROCEDURES; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

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Subtitle

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TO ENACT THE ARKANSAS TEEN DRIVER AND

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PARENTAL EDUCATION ACT OF 2015.

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19 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

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*WHEREAS, injuries caused by motor vehicle accidents are the leading
cause of death for children and adolescents in the United States and in
Arkansas. Motor vehicle crashes rank first for injury-related deaths and
disability, particularly for teenagers between fourteen (14) and nineteen
(19) years of age, accounting for one-third (1/3) of teen deaths; and*

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*WHEREAS, the risk of motor vehicle accidents is highest when
adolescents are learning to drive and within the first year after licensing.
Adolescents represent the highest risk age group on the roads. Drivers
sixteen (16) years of age are four (4) times more likely to be involved in a
motor vehicle accident than drivers between the ages of twenty (20) and
twenty-four (24); and*

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*WHEREAS, Arkansas has historically had much higher rates of teen
driving crashes and fatalities than other states. As recently as 2008,
Arkansas teens were dying at two (2) times the national average; and*

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2 *WHEREAS, motor vehicle death rates recently have decreased nationally*
3 *and more dramatically in Arkansas, with a reduction of more than fifty*
4 *percent (50%) in the past six (6) years; and*

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6 *WHEREAS, recent research has led to an improved understanding of the*
7 *factors that make learning to drive and novice driving safer, including a*
8 *three phase approach: the learner stage with supervised driving, the*
9 *intermediate stage permitting solo driving with restrictions on high-risk*
10 *situations, followed by granting a full license without driving*
11 *restrictions; and*

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13 *WHEREAS, new research that focuses on supervised driver experience*
14 *during the learner's period demonstrates the importance of having a licensed*
15 *driver as a coach during the first twelve (12) months of driving experience*
16 *while learning to negotiate the many demands of driving safely, reducing the*
17 *likelihood of deaths and insurance claims for drivers sixteen (16) years of*
18 *age by as much as twenty-six percent (26%); and*

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20 *WHEREAS, statistical research offered by the Arkansas Center for*
21 *Health Improvement, in coordination with the Injury Prevention Center at*
22 *Arkansas Children's Hospital, demonstrates that parental involvement, teen*
23 *driver education, and enforcement of the principles of the graduated drivers*
24 *licenses contained in Arkansas Code § 27-16-701, et seq., and Arkansas Code §*
25 *27-16-801, et seq., have reduced the loss of life and injuries to teen*
26 *drivers; and*

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28 *WHEREAS, a demonstrated need exists for more parental education about*
29 *the mechanics and procedures contained in the graduated drivers license laws*
30 *to help Arkansas families procure drivers licenses for their teenagers; and*

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32 *WHEREAS, in rural Arkansas limited opportunities exist for teens to*
33 *apply, take the written driving test, and take the drivers' skills test*
34 *necessary to procure a drivers license; and*

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36 *WHEREAS, it is in the best interest of Arkansas's families to*

1 *streamline the process to reduce time away from work for parents; and*
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3 *WHEREAS the Department of Arkansas State Police is the lead*
4 *governmental agency in testing for drivers licenses and providing*
5 *information about obtaining drivers licenses; and*
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7 *WHEREAS, the Department of Arkansas State Police is promulgating rules*
8 *and conducting training to make drivers license testing consistent across*
9 *the state; and*
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11 *WHEREAS, the Department of Arkansas State Police is taking steps to*
12 *proliferate vital information about drivers education and licensing*
13 *procedures; and*
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15 *WHEREAS, the Department of Finance and Administration dispenses the*
16 *drivers' licenses after all prerequisites have been complied with by*
17 *prospective teen drivers and their families through the Department of*
18 *Arkansas State Police,*
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20 *NOW THEREFORE,*

21 *BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:*

22 *SECTION 1. DO NOT CODIFY. Title.*

23 *This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Arkansas Teen Driver*
24 *and Parental Education Act of 2015".*
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26 *SECTION 2. DO NOT CODIFY. Duties of Department of Arkansas State*
27 *Police.*

28 *The Department of Arkansas State Police shall:*

29 *(1) Improve its official website in coordination with the*
30 *Injury Prevention Center at Arkansas Children's Hospital to:*

31 *(A) Become the repository of information regarding the*
32 *mechanics and procedures for obtaining graduated drivers licenses; and*

33 *(B) Include without limitation:*

34 *(i) A parental checklist of steps needed to obtain a*
35 *graduated drivers license;*

36 *(ii) Specific information about documents needed*

1 to make application for a graduated drivers license; and

2 (iii) Specific information regarding the times for
 3 the written driving tests and the driving skills tests in each county of
 4 the state;

5 (2) In coordination with the Injury Prevention Center at
 6 Arkansas Children's Hospital, distribute information electronically,
 7 virtually, and through literature about the graduated drivers license
 8 application and procedures to:

9 (A) Secondary schools throughout the state; and

10 (B) Parents of prospective drivers;

11 (3) Update the drivers manual in coordination with the Injury
 12 Prevention Center at Arkansas Children's Hospital; and

13 (4)(A) File a report with the cochairs of the Legislative
 14 Council and the Director of the Bureau of Legislative Research
 15 within one hundred eighty (180) days of the effective date of this
 16 act.

17 (B) The report shall include:

18 (i) A detailed description of all steps taken to
 19 comply with this section; and

20 (ii) Recommendations to improve drivers licensing
 21 practices and procedures, driver education, and driver safety in this
 22 state.

23
 24 *SECTION 3. Arkansas Code § 27-16-802(a), concerning instruction*
 25 *permits for drivers who are at least fourteen (14) years of age, is amended*
 26 *to read as follows:*

27 *(a)(1) Any person who is at least fourteen (14) years of age may apply*
 28 *to the ~~Office of Driver Services~~ Department of Arkansas State Police for an*
 29 *instruction permit.*

30 *(2)(A) After the applicant has successfully passed all parts of*
 31 *the examination other than the driving test, the ~~office~~ department may, in*
 32 *its discretion, issue to the applicant an instruction permit which shall*
 33 *entitle the applicant while having the permit in his or her immediate*
 34 *possession to drive a motor vehicle upon the public highways for a period of*
 35 *~~six (6) months~~ twelve (12) months when accompanied by a licensed driver who*
 36 *is at least twenty-one (21) years of age and who is occupying a seat beside*

1 the driver, except in the event that the permittee is operating a motorcycle.

2 (B) Six (6) months after an instruction permit is issued
3 under subdivision (a)(2)(A) of this section, a driver who is at least sixteen
4 (16) years of age and has passed all parts of the written examination and the
5 driving test is no longer subject to the driving restrictions under
6 subdivision (a)(2)(A) of this section.

7 ~~(3) Any instruction permit may be renewed or a new permit issued~~
8 ~~for an additional period of six (6) months as long as the permittee has~~
9 ~~remained free of a serious accident and conviction of a serious traffic~~
10 ~~violation for at least the previous six (6) months.~~

11 ~~(4) Any passengers riding in the motor vehicle while a permittee~~
12 ~~is driving shall wear seat belts at all times.~~

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14 /s/Irvin
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