



Jesse White

SECRETARY OF STATE

NEWS

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Secretary of State Jesse White Reaffirms his Opposition to Raising the Driving Age in Illinois

Secretary of State Jesse White reaffirmed today his opposition to raising the driving age in Illinois. Earlier today the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety announced it supports raising the driving age nationwide to 17 or 18.

White emphasized the answer to reducing teen fatal crashes lies not with raising the driving age, but rather on working to better prepare young, novice drivers, regardless of their age, and increasing parental involvement.

“This is why my office initiated a new teen driver safety law, effective January 1, 2008, that gives Illinois one of the strongest graduated driver licensing (GDL) programs in the nation,” said White. “The new law better prepares teen drivers by tripling the length of the permit phase, increasing parental involvement, limiting in-car distractions, and strengthening penalties.”

The early results of the new law are encouraging. In the first seven months since the law took effect, teen crash fatalities have declined by 47 percent. This has resulted in 44 fewer teen deaths on Illinois roads in 2008 when compared to the first seven months in 2007.

“This law is working as intended,” said White. “Teen lives are being saved.”

To further bolster the impact of the new law, White’s office has developed a GDL Parent-Teen Driving Guidebook to help parents observe and instruct their teen drivers during the nine-month permit phase. The 32-page guidebook offers parents a blueprint to follow when accompanying their teens as they log the required 50 hours of practice driving. The guidebooks, which also contain a voluntary parent-teen contract, are being provided to those parents that have teens enrolled in driver education class. For more information on the guidebook, please visit www.cyberdriveillinois.com.

In addition, White’s office initiated another key law effective this year that allows parents of teens under age 18 to view their teen’s driving record free online at www.cyberdriveillinois.com.

“By giving parents access to these driving records, we are helping them stay even more involved in their teenagers' driving patterns as they proceed through the GDL program,” said White. “Parental involvement is a key component to any successful GDL program.”

White stressed that while he is pleased with the results of the new law, his work is not done.

“My mission is to make Illinois roads as safe as possible,” said White. “If we find we can improve upon the new law, we will do so.”

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