

## Ohio House Transportation and Public Safety Committee

December 13, 2017

### HB 293 Proponent Testimony

Susan Hans: President, Ohio PTA

Good morning Chairman Green, Vice Chair Greenspan, Ranking Member Sheehy, and members of the committee. Thank you for this opportunity to speak before you. My name is Susan Hans and I have the pleasure of serving as president of the Ohio PTA. Ohio PTA is the oldest and largest volunteer organization in the State of Ohio focusing on the health, welfare, safety and education of children and youth. Organized in May 1901, the Ohio PTA, a branch of the National PTA, is composed of almost 60,000 members. Through our association with National PTA, we have championed many health and safety reforms for children such as the start of child labor laws, juvenile courts, kindergarten, school lunches, and required immunizations. In keeping with our focus on youth safety, we are pleased to be part of the Ohio GDL Coalition. Motor vehicle accidents are the number one cause of death of young teens, age 15-17 in Ohio. According to the Ohio Department of Public Safety in 2016, there were 73,600 young driver- involved crashes killing 171 people and injuring 19,290 more. Ohio PTA is committed to supporting GDL changes that reduce these statistics.

In April 2012, Ohio PTA adopted a Teen Drivers and Safety Resolution. This resolution supports strong driver education and GDL requirements to instill a lifetime of safe driving attitudes and behaviors among drivers. Studies have shown that inexperience and risk-taking greatly contribute to teen driver crashes, with crashes being the highest during the first six months or the first 1,000-3,000 miles driven after licensure. We support nighttime protections, passenger limits, safety belt requirements, mobile device limitations and consistent education - protections that keep teens as well as other drivers safe on the road. We believe that elements of an effective GDL have been proven to reduce crashes in other states by maximizing experience while minimizing risks. This Ohio PTA resolution was adopted by our membership because parents view the graduated driver licensing system as a valuable component in helping parents provide protections for their teens drivers.

Ohio PTA resolved to promote through legislation, more effective GDL laws in the State of Ohio and we believe that House Bill 293 helps to modernize Ohio's GDL system. House Bill 293 proposes 2 small changes to our current law that will make a positive impact on teen safety. First, by lengthening the temporary instruction permit phase from 6 to 12 months, our teen drivers are able to gain more driving practice in

all types of weather conditions with an adult at their side. This increase in practical experience will help new drivers gain vehicle-handling skills, improve their ability to judge traffic and learn how to be a better defensive driver. We believe that parents are very supportive of additional driving experience to ensure teen safety.

Second, by beginning the nighttime driving protections for newly licensed drivers at 9pm, rather than midnight, this modification will protect our newly licensed drivers from the most dangerous driving conditions while they are still inexperienced and adjusting to driving without adult supervision. As you may know, 75% of nighttime teen crashes occur between 9 P.M. and 12 A.M. Our teens need more practice driving at this riskier time period. We support the exceptions for employment, religious functions and school functions with the proper documentation. This will be an adjustment for our parents and schools administrators, however it will serve to reduce the number of newly licensed drivers on the road at this vulnerable time. We believe that parents, school personnel and community members will work together to implement the policies and procedures required by modernizing Ohio's GDL laws. The benefits of further protecting teen drivers out weigh the inconveniences and everyone involved will adapt- as they have adapted to prior changes in our GDL system.

Both changes to our current GDL system will help improve safety for teen drivers as well as everyone else on the road. As the largest volunteer child advocacy organization in our state, Ohio PTA supports these changes to the current GDL law.