

Ohio House Transportation and Public Safety Committee

December 13, 2017

HB 293 Proponent Testimony

Stella Mayher

Good morning Chairman Green, Vice Chair Greenspan, Ranking Member Sheehy, and members of the committee. Thank you for this opportunity to speak before you. I am here to advocate for House Bill 293, and I'd like to tell you why. My beautiful, 16-year old, daughter, Kailee, my only child was fatally injured in a tragic car crash on June 7, 2017. A crash that didn't have to happen. The driver, her friend, was also 16 and had her license for just a month. It was 10:30 at night. In an instant, our lives were forever changed. I'm here so that other families might not have to endure such horrific pain that my husband and I live daily. The small but powerful change in the licensing laws for teens before you can ensure that.

What is before you is a simple extension of the time it takes for a teen to earn a driver's license. It would change the length of time a teen would hold a temporary driver's license from 6 months to 12 months ensuring teenagers will get the opportunity to gain experience behind the wheel in all types of weather and traffic conditions. Further, this bill revises the nighttime protection for probationary license holders just 3 more hours, from midnight to 9:00 PM, which will dramatically reduce crashes. Research shows that 79% of crashes involving 16-year-old drivers in Ohio occur between the hours of 9:00 PM and midnight*. Research also shows that after decades of decline, teenage deaths from car crashes have begun to rise nationally**.

The request before you is reasonable. The proposed revisions will make our teens better drivers in the long run since the more teens drive, the more they learn. It will also keep them alive. Experience takes

*According to AAA. Statistics are derived from Ohio Department of Public Safety.

**According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety.

time to gain. There is no substitute for it. We need to give our children time to learn and time to mature. We owe that to them to keep them safe. While giving our teens the ability to drive themselves affords parents tremendous convenience, I can assure you that no amount of convenience is worth the devastation of having to plan your child's funeral.

I want you to know that Kailee was a beautiful girl with a bright future ahead of her. Kailee was what every parent wants their child to be. She was kind, respectful, smart, and had a fantastic sense of humor. She loved life, her family, and friends. She was hard-working and generous to a fault. She was a straight-A student taking advanced honors classes in the hope of one day becoming a doctor because she wanted to help others. Unfortunately, that will never happen. Kailee's life ended far too soon but it can still leave a lasting purpose. You can help countless others by preventing similar tragedies caused by inexperienced drivers. Let's do everything we can to protect our children. I implore you to pass House Bill 293.

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