

TO: Chairman Green, Vice Chairman Greenspan, Ranking Member Sheehy, and members of the House Transportation and Public Safety Committee

FROM: Sharon Montgomery  
traffic crash victim; 15-year traffic safety activist  
[smontgomery77@yahoo.com](mailto:smontgomery77@yahoo.com)  
614-475-8588

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SUBJECT: HB 293 proponent testimony

I am submitting this written testimony in support of HB 293 to enhance Ohio's graduated drivers licensing program for two very simple reasons:

- 1) The enhancements are recommended by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, and
- 2) The driving environment has become very complex.

I have followed AAA's work on various traffic safety issues for fifteen years and have *always* found it to be firmly grounded in competent and thorough research. When AAA recommends a safety measure, we can be confident they have "done their homework" well.

When our son learned to drive in 1995, we were extremely concerned about how much more complex driving had become since we learned to drive in the 1960s and also about the brief and inadequate training curriculum his friends were encountering. We designed our own incremental training program for him that we used before, during, and after his formal training.

That was 22 years ago and the driving environment has become enormously more complex since then. We now have

- more lanes, requiring more lane changes to end up where we need to be
- roundabouts with signage difficult to process in the time it takes to drive past it
- bicycle lanes, with confusing new street markings and the need for right turns to be made across the bicycle lane
- elaborate cross-over freeway exits and entrances
- left-turn lanes separated from the through lanes by hash marks or raised, curbed areas
- left turn lanes that begin so far in advance we can't always be sure at the start of them they are the lane we are going to need
- electronic billboards with changing messages tempting us to watch them instead of traffic

Add to this mix an increase in traffic volume; increased speed limits; an increase of drivers choosing to pay attention to electronic devices instead of traffic; seemingly-constant construction obstacles; and drivers choosing to do what they want, when they want to, and where they want to despite the signs, rules, signals, and street markings.

I thank AAA for providing good background material, Representatives Scherer and Sheehy for using that material and bringing us this bill, and all of you for giving this bill careful consideration.