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Thank you, Chair Ghanbari, Vice Chair Plummer, Ranking Member Thomas, and House Homeland Security Committee members, for allowing me to introduce HB 395. Today, I am here before you with the most significant and urgent importance—the safety of our young drivers on the roadways of Ohio.

As a proud sponsor of Ohio House Bill 395, I urge you to take a moment and consider the importance of lessening the threats our teenage drivers face every time they get behind the wheel. Statistics hit us every year, and they are eye-openers regarding the vulnerability of our young ones on the road. Teen drivers, being less experienced, take part in proportionally more cases of traffic accidents, many of which entail tragic outcomes.

As lawmakers and guardians of our community's health, we must protect our young citizens from these preventable threats. Ohio House Bill 395 is designed for this very task. The legislation works to increase teen drivers' safety in several ways. The first bill would extend the learner's permit phase for young drivers to give them an extra period to acquire practical driving experience by allowing them to drive under an adult's supervision before driving independently. This learning process is extended up to the development of skills and judgment necessary to handle the complexities of the road safely.

Further, the bill aims to address the risks occasioned by night driving, and the number of passengers, which research has shown is the primary cause of accidents involving teens behind the wheel. These driving hour restrictions and the limitation on the number of passengers a young driver can have are supposed to minimize the distraction and probability of the risky high-traffic scenario.

Additionally, Ohio House Bill 395 also sees education and awareness as necessary. This will call for enhanced driver education programs. The programs must offer advanced safety training, provide simulated real-life driver scenarios, and educate our teens on making responsible decisions while confidently operating a vehicle. It's not just passing a bill; this is a commitment to our families, our children, and the future of this great state.

The bill's approval in Ohio represents a firm step toward young drivers' ensuring that safe driving conditions are met above all, including responsibility, respect, and care for others on the road.. Thanks for all your kind attention, compassion, and dedication to making Ohio a better and safer place for all.