

Testimony Supporting Proposed Amendment (HC_136_0512) to HB 96
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Ohio House Finance Committee

Chair Stewart, Vice Chair Dovilla, and Ranking Member Sweeney – thank you for the opportunity to provide interested party testimony on HB 96. My name is Jason Wrather and I am the AVP of Innovation at Grange Insurance Company. Grange is an Ohio-based company proudly headquartered right here in Columbus.

My role as the Innovation Leader is to develop new and exciting technologies for the company. I'm here today not to focus on insurance, but rather to share my passion for helping Ohioans learn how to drive in a safe manner.

Technology can be utilized to assist Ohioans through two important phases of driver training. Those two phases are 50-hours of parent coaching and 8-hours of behind the wheel in-car evaluation. This technology would validate that the proper number of practice hours has been completed, provide guidance to develop safe driving skills, and evaluate the successful mastery of those driving skills. Rest assured. A licensed adult will always need to be in the car.

For new technology to be successful, a change to Ohio law is necessary.

In previous testimony to the House Public Safety committee, Director Wilson at Public Safety stated the following: **“the cost and availability of driver education can be a barrier for many new teen drivers in Ohio with courses ranging in cost from \$300-\$800 and lengthy wait times for in-car training. Governor DeWine has challenged us to make drivers education more accessible by reducing these and other barriers.”**

The potential benefits of the new technology will help remedy these current problems set forth by Director Wilson. The new technology will be able to provide benefits such as – Enhanced Safety, and a more Affordable and Accessible option for Ohio families.

- Safety – Technology will provide guidance on the safest roads to travel so that Ohioans can gradually build their driving skills at their own pace.
- Affordability and Accessibility - There is a potential for cost savings for families by using the technology application to complete their driver training coursework. Allowing a licensed driver to complete some of the in-car instruction will relieve some of the pressures associated with driver training such as long wait times and even longer commutes to driving schools in some rural areas.

Grange has been working with members of the General Assembly on this issue. To that end, we have prepared an amendment (HC_136_0512) to HB 96 that will allow for this innovation in Ohio and request the Committee's support for the amendment. This amendment will not impact Ohio's budget as there is no appropriation connected to it.

In closing, I would like to leave you with three important thoughts.

1. **Safety comes First**– The amendment language requires that this technology be reviewed and approved by the Department of Public Safety prior to any use
2. **Consumer Choice is Preserved** – The amendment will provide new driver training options for Ohioans while keeping traditional driver training available to all.
3. **Jobs are Protected** – This technology serves as a compliment to, not a replacement for, our valuable driving instructors and schools.

Ohio was a national leader with the introduction of the Graduated Driver License System back in 1998. Now we have an opportunity to lead again with a Modernized Driver Training change in Ohio law. I am happy to answer any questions.