



Written Testimony of Rachel Wilson

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AAA – The Auto Club Group

HF1684/SF1159 Transportation Finance and Policy Omnibus Bill

Chairs: Representative Frank Hornstein and Senator Scott Newman

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Thank you Chairs Hornstein and Newman and members of the Conference Committee, for the opportunity to testify in favor of HF1684/SF1159. My name is Rachel Wilson, and I am the director of the driver education programs for AAA – The Auto Club Group. The Auto Club Group currently provides services including insurance, driver training, emergency roadside assistance, and advocacy to over 600,000 AAA members in Minnesota. Personally, I have taught driver education for almost 15 years.

It is important to first clarify what this bill addresses. This bill is only aimed at providing teens the option to take the “book work” portion of driver training online rather than on-location at a driving school. Traditional classroom driver education would continue to remain an option, we simply want to add an alternative option for teens to make their driver education as productive and accessible as possible.

While taking the online course, a licensed, Minnesota instructor would be available to support the students as needed. Students would still be required to complete driving lessons with a licensed, Minnesota instructor and successfully pass the state exam.

28 states already allow online driver education in some form. To date, over 100,000 students have successfully completed AAA’s Online How to Drive program.

In addition, online driver education offers a plethora of benefits that in-person instruction simply cannot.

- Teens in remote locations may not have access to quality driver education which may force parents to drive long distances to get their teens the instruction they need. Online driver education solves this problem. By allowing online driver education as an option, more Minnesota teens will have access to high quality driver education that is needed to pass the state licensing exam and most importantly, become a safe driver.
- Traffic, road, and weather conditions or even a pandemic health crisis can also create challenges for students to attend in-person classes whereas online instruction can be done in the safety of their own homes.

- Students can work through the course at times that work best for their already busy schedules. This means students won't have to sacrifice sports, jobs, school, or any other commitments during their driving education.
- All educators know that different students learn at different paces. Online driver education would also allow students to learn at their own pace, rather than being forced to conform to an inflexible 30-hour meeting schedule that a particular in-person driving school has set. This is particularly important for those students who need more time to grasp certain driving concepts.
- A high quality online driver education program encourages more student engagement and involvement than some traditional classroom courses because the technology intelligently incorporates quizzes, interactive traffic scenarios and various other tools to increase student participation and retention of the content.
- In-person instruction can be limited by the particular teaching style of the human instructor, whereas online technology offers the instructional variety needed to engage all types of learners. Additionally, those students who may be too shy to participate in a classroom with peers would be able to engage with the material in private.

In summary, high quality driver education can certainly be delivered by different means. Allowing online driver education as an alternative option to the existing in-person classroom portion of drivers training is something that can really benefit Minnesota teens. Research shows that a quality online course it is just as good and at times better than in-person instruction while offering some distinct advantages over traditional in-person instruction.

Thank you for your time and I'll be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you,



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