



WALLACE COUNTY

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To: Chairman Shannon Francis and members of the Kansas House Transportation Committee

From: Christine Smith, Wallace County Treasurer

Re: HB 2523 – Oral Proponent Testimony

Date: Wednesday, January 31st, 2024

Chairman Francis and members of the Kansas House Transportation Committee:

Thank you for considering HB 2523 and for allowing me the opportunity to testify in support of this bill. To first understand why HB 2523 is before you, I'd like to provide some history.

In 2022, SB 446 was passed and signed into law, allowing teen drivers at age 15 years, to drive to and from religious activities, sponsored by religious organizations under the umbrella of their restricted drivers license. As a county treasurer and drivers license examiner, I was immediately aware of the inconsistency this new law created between the two license types that 15 year olds may hold; those being a farm permit and a restricted license. It was also quickly apparent that the addition of this privilege on one type of license only added further confusion for parents as they studied which type of license best suited their teen driver and their specific needs.

As the Kansas Department of Revenue's [Graduated Driver License Requirements for Teen Drivers](#) reads:

Farm Permit Holders, age 15 may drive to and from their farm employment or other farm related work and to & from school when in session for the purpose of attendance.

Restricted license holders, age 15 may drive to and from work, to and from school when in session for the purpose of attendance. *Additionally, they may also drive to and from religious activities when those activities are sponsored by a religious organization.*

The passage of HB 2523 would create consistency amongst 15 year old drivers, allowing farm permit holders to drive to youth groups, church services, and other religious activities, just as their peers holding restricted licenses.

In my rural community in Northwest Kansas, most teens are obtaining farm permits at age 14 and driving alone under the above allowances from that time. This is also true for other areas of rural Kansas. The passing of HB 2523 will allow these drivers the same allowance that their peers have in cities and more urban communities, thus making a tremendous difference to families in rural communities across the state.

Thank you for your time and consideration of HB 2523. If I can be of any assistance answering questions, please contact me.

Respectfully,

Christine Smith
Wallace County Treasurer