

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Rex Crowell at 1:30 p.m. on March 15, 1993 in Room 519-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except: All Present

Committee staff present: Tom Severn, Legislative Research Department  
Hank Avila, Legislative Research Department  
Bruce Kinzie, Revisor of Statutes  
Donna Luttjohann, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: Sen. Mark Parkinson  
Helen Stephens, Blue Valley Schools  
Darrell Cyr, Cyr's Driving School  
Saretta Culver  
Carol Schell  
Kyle Bauer

Others attending: See attached list

Chairman Crowell opened the hearing on SB 114 regarding the minimum driving age. Hank Avila, Legislative Research, summarized the bill for the committee.

The Chairman recognized Sen. Parkinson, sponsor of the bill. He gave testimony regarding the reasons behind the need for this bill. See Attachment 1 for his written testimony.

Helen Stephens of Blue Valley Schools was recognized by the Chairman as a proponent of the bill. She testified also as a single-parent of a 15 year old. See Attachment 2.

Darrell Cyr of Cyr's Driving School was recognized by Chairman Crowell. He testified as a proponent of the bill. See Attachment 3.

Saretta Culver, a parent of a 14 year old child killed in an auto accident, was recognized by the Chairman as a proponent of the bill. See her written testimony in Attachment 4.

Carol Schell, a friend of Saretta Culver, was recognized by the Chairman as a proponent of the bill. She testified that she is the mother of two daughters past the age of 16. She stated she felt that 14 and 15 years of age is too young to drive.

Chairman Crowell recognized Kyle Bauer from Clay Center, Kansas, as an opponent of the bill. See Attachment 5 for his written testimony.

The Chairman stated that written testimony from the Kansas Farm Bureau, see Attachment 6 and the Kansans for Highway Safety, see Attachment 7 would be placed in the record.

The Chairman closed the hearing on SB 114.

The meeting was adjourned by Chairman Crowell at 3:04 p.m. with the next meeting scheduled for March 16, 1993, at 1:30 p.m. in Room 519-S of the Capitol.

# GUEST LIST

## HOUSE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

March 15, 1993

Name	Address	Representing
Saretha L. Culver	Wichita	K.S.
Kyle Bauer	1072 23rd Rd	Morganville, Ks. Self
Joe Emmons	Topeka	K.S. B.E.
Joe Kyr	Brookville	
John Rasmussen	Kingman	High School
Vicki Lushenberry	Kingman	High School
Richard W. Jones	RR. 2	Kingman High School Activities
Aliza Boyer	" "	" "
Clark J. Jola	RR. 2	Kingman High School and Rural Owners
Mica Fischer	Kingman	High School
Chris Tucker	Kingman	High School
Mary E. Turkington	Kansas Motor Carriers Assn. - Topeka	
Dean Thrasher	610 N Exchange	St. John
Rebecca Thrasher	610 N Exchange	St. John
Bill Sneed	Topeka	State Farm
Stacy Moxford	Topeka	AT
John Sm. Th	Topeka	KDOR
Betty McBride	Topeka	KDOR
Rea Wilson	Olathe	Sun Newspapers

MARK PARKINSON  
SENATOR, 23RD DISTRICT  
REPRESENTING GARDNER, OLATHE,  
OVERLAND PARK, SPRING HILL  
16000 W. 136TH TERRACE  
OLATHE, KANSAS 66062  
913-829-5044



TOPEKA

SENATE CHAMBER

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS  
CHAIRMAN: LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
MEMBER: JUDICIARY  
FEDERAL AND STATE AFFAIRS  
ELECTIONS

**TO: CHAIRMAN CROWELL AND MEMBERS OF  
THE HOUSE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE**

**FROM: SENATOR MARK PARKINSON**

**DATE: MARCH 15, 1993**

**RE: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 114**

#### INTRODUCTION

I again want to thank the Chairman of this committee for scheduling SB 114 for hearing and for providing me the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this bill. By way of history, let me report that it has passed the Senate on a 30 to 10 vote. It is very similar to legislation that passed the House last year, but then became stalled in the Senate.

The bill brief is more than adequate, but let me briefly explain what this bill does. Essentially, the bill would eliminate 14 year old driving except for those persons who were eligible for a farm permit. Fifteen year old driving would be restricted. Fifteen year olds would still be allowed to receive the current restricted license, but only after passing a driver's education course. In addition, 15 year olds would continue to be allowed to receive learner's permits for purposes of learning how to drive.

#### RATIONALE FOR THE LEGISLATION

The need for this legislation is no different than the testimony that I provided to this committee earlier in the session. Kansas is one of only a few states that allows 14 year olds to drive, and none allow it as broadly as we do. The price we pay is an unfortunate toll of death and serious injury among our young children.

The Kansans for Highway Safety have updated the accident information and have again confirmed the extremely high fatality rate for 14 year old drivers. Ed Klump for Kansans for Highway Safety testified before this committee earlier this session. He

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has now provided a summary of his new data which shows that a 14 year old driver is four times more likely to be involved in a fatal or incapacitating accident as a 16 year old driver. Fifteen year olds suffer a greater risk than 16 year olds, but not nearly as high a risk as 14 year old drivers. Attached to my testimony you will find a copy of a chart that has been produced by the Kansas's for Highway Safety that demonstrates the very high rate of accidents among 14 and 15 year old drivers.

Rather than repeat the testimony that I provided to you earlier this session, let me address a couple of issues that have arisen. The first is the question of a county option. We considered the idea and found that it is not workable. Law enforcement indicated that it could not be enforced because there are many situations of children who live in rural areas who work or go to school in other counties that could conceivably raise the age. For example, there are many persons in my district who live in northern Miami County, yet, who go to work in southern Johnson County or school in Johnson County. The county option would likely cause the age to be raised in Johnson County but not in Miami County. Enforcement of this law would be impossible.

The second issue that I would like to address is the frequently heard complaint that this bill would reek havoc on rural areas. While there is no doubt in my mind that passage of this law would cause some inconvenience and some readjustment, I do believe that the concerns are perhaps a bit overblown. To support that position, I would point out three items. The first is that the bill does contain an agricultural exception. Young persons who live or work on a farm are able to continue to obtain a license as they currently are for purposes of farm activity. Therefore, any sort of economic concern is taken care of. At that point, the only argument becomes a convenience argument which, in my mind , the death and injuries do not justify.

The second point that I would make is that virtually every other state, including many rural states, do not allow 14 and 15 year olds to drive, and those states survive fine.

Finally, I am not as convinced that the out pouring of rural opposition is as strong as many may perceive. Traditionally this bill has received strong support Kansas City, Johnson County, Topeka, and Wichita. In the past year, we have seen an interesting change. There have been editorial endorsements in support of this legislation from Salina, Garden City, Hays, Parsons, and a variety of other papers across the state. In addition, legislators from rural areas who have taken surveys on this issue have often been surprised at the large amount of support in favor of raising the age. Obviously, we do not make our policy decisions based solely on poll results, but I do believe that the perception that everyone from a rural area is against this bill is incorrect.

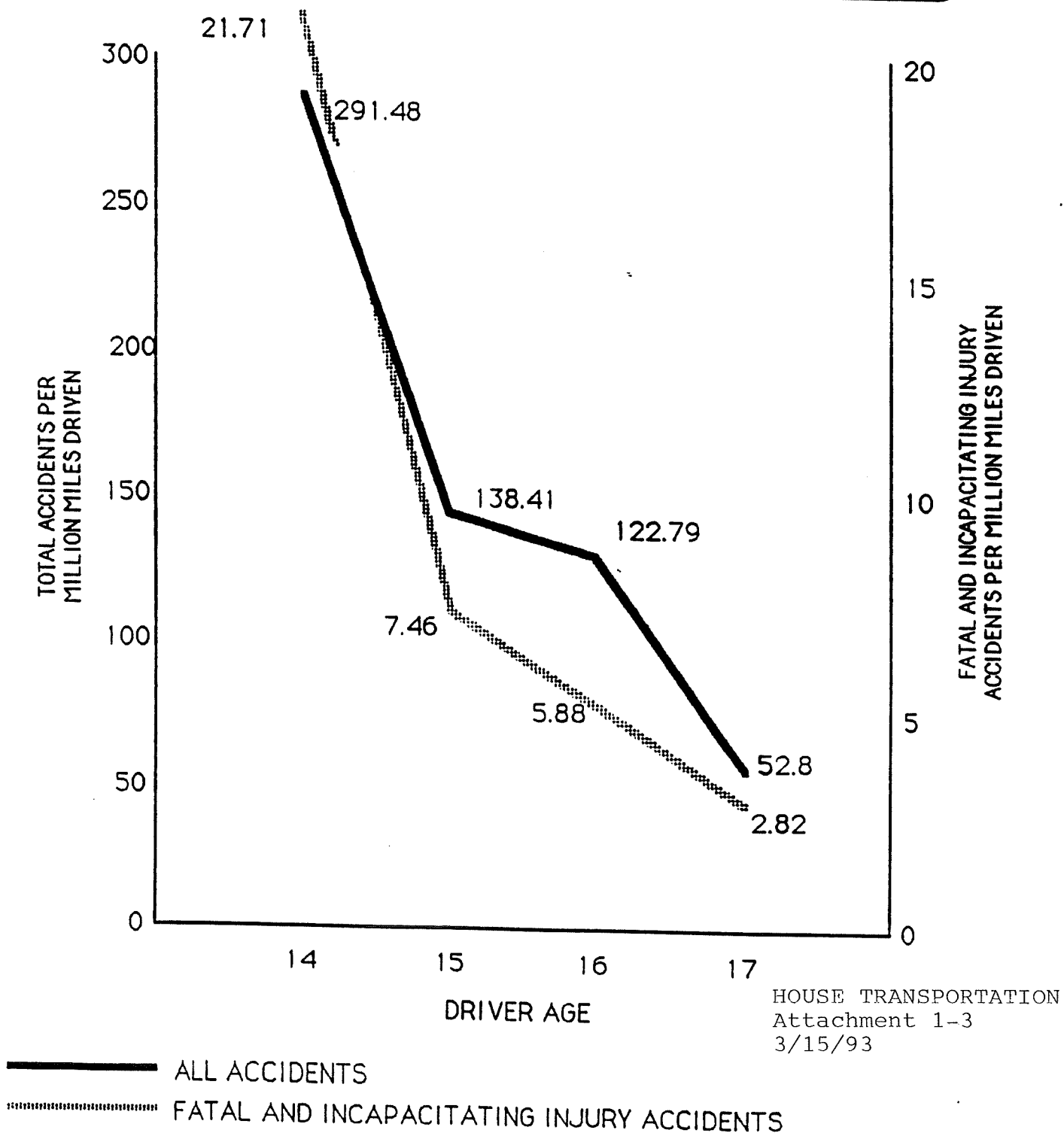
Again, I thank the Chairman for scheduling this hearing, and I will attempt to answer any questions that you may have.

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*Mark Parker*

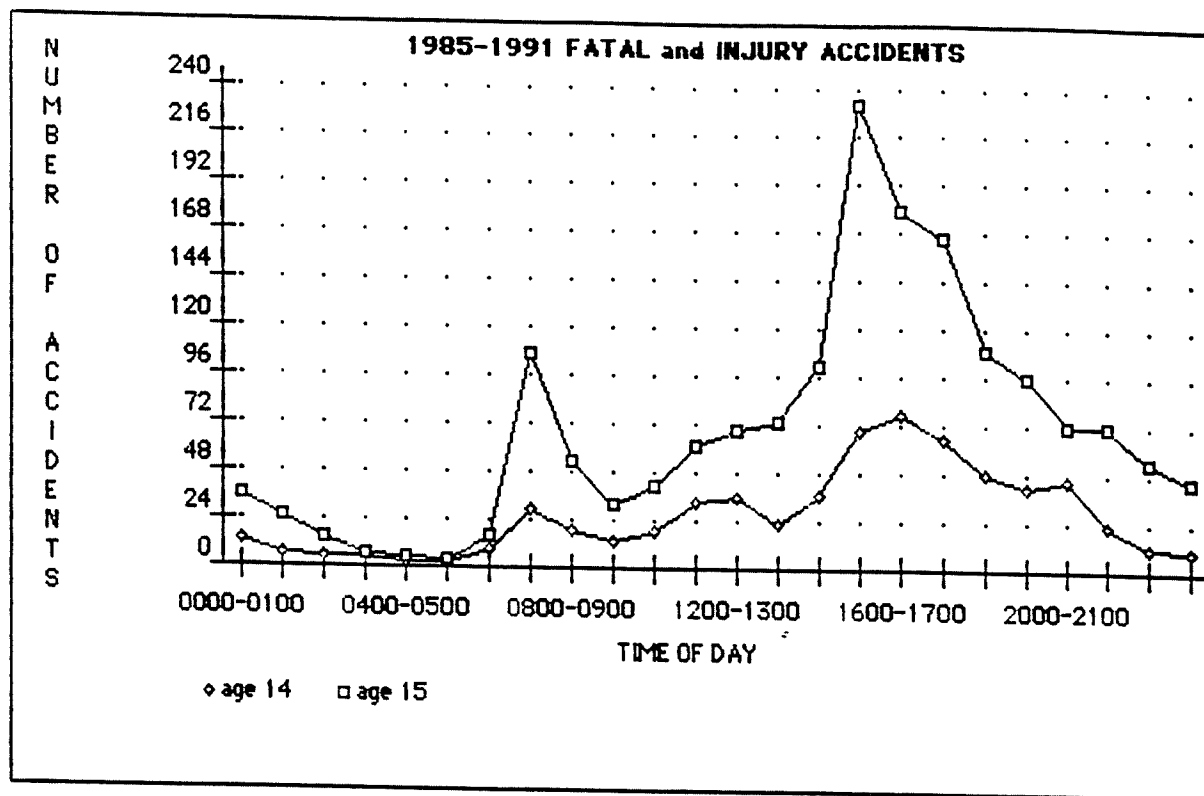
## KANSAS MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENTS

PER MILLION MILES DRIVEN  
1986 THROUGH 1991



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PREPARED BY KANSAS FOR HIGHWAY SAFETY  
REVISED 2/10/93



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## BLUE VALLEY U.S.D. 229

House Transportation Committee  
Senate Bill No. 114  
March 15, 1993

My name is Helen Stephens, representing Blue Valley U.S.D. 229.

Raising the driving age has been on our legislative agenda for four years, and has been supported by our legislative coalition group for two years. The legislative coalition group is made up of parents, teachers, administrators, and board members.

Whether we come from an urban or rural setting, our main concern should be the safety of our young people. Statistics prove there is a danger for our 14-year olds to be driving, statistics show there is also a danger for those children in the auto with a 14-year old driver.

We believe it is time to put aside urban/rural concerns, the concerns of "inconvenience" to urban and/or rural parents, and concentrate on the one issue that is of prime importance to everyone, whether urban or rural -- and that is the safety of ALL Kansas children.

We have supported other bills and we have considered other alternatives (county option; population option), but believe the bill before you is the best to date.

We believe Senate Bill 114 is an excellent compromise. This bill takes into account the rural concerns regarding farm work and handles this with the farm permit; while at the same time saying we recognize there is a problem and taking the bold steps to correct it.

We urge this committee to pass SB 114 favorably.

Thank you for this opportunity.

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HOUSE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE  
Senate Bill 114  
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My name is Helen Stephens and although I am a lobbyist, I am removing my badges to speak to you today as a parent.

During the past several years, I have heard how this bill was going to inconvenience parents, especially those single parents; I have heard from rural legislators that urban parents just need to say NO to driving privileges; and I have heard that this is a parent problem because they are the ones abusing the privilege.

I am a single Mom with two boys, ages 14 and 15. I have taken a stand and told both boys -- no license until 16, and maybe a learner's permit at 15-1/2 to take driver's education if the grades are there.

Up to now I haven't had a problem, except for the usual begging to change my mind. I am a "taxi" for them and their friends to any and all functions (except concerts); and yes, sometimes it is inconvenient, especially when I'm a taxi for two separate groups for different functions on the same evening at roughly the same time. I am also a taxi for sporting events that take place in St. Joseph, Missouri, so I am familiar with the long distance traveling involved. I am not a taxi to just my kids, but to a number of others also.

But, I was their taxi when they were 12 and 13; what difference does one or two additional years make? I believe the health and safety of my children and others is the most important issue.

What is of concern, and a problem, is the "policing" on this matter that I have to do when my 15-year old wants to attend some function, but wants to go with his friends and not have "mom" drive. Too many times lately, the driver is a 14 or 15-year old who has a permit, and the parents are allowing their children to break the law. I have held my position and refused to allow my boys to attend functions under those conditions, but what about the safety of the other children who are allowed to go? What about the safety of other innocent drivers who might collide with this 14 or 15-year old driver? And, what about the signal these parents are sending to their children, that is OK to break the law?

I, and other parents, do our best to know the friends of our children and their parents; but when there are 400 in a freshman class, it is an impossible task.

I believe this committee must ignore the "inconvenience" issue, the single parent issue, the school-related activities issue -- I believe this committee must dwell on what is best for ALL Kansas children. You must dwell on what is in their best interests and what gives them the best chance for a healthy, happy life. If looked at in this context, I believe the compromise bill in front of you today is your only answer.

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Good Morning (Afternoon), my name is Darrell D. Cyr. I have owned and operated Cyr's Driving School in Wichita for 30 years. I am also Regional Vice President of the Driving School Association of the Americas, an international professional driving school association that advocates 18-year-old licensure. I am here to address you regarding bill 114 currently before you that will increase the legal minimum driving age to 16.

My peers from DSAA have told me that one of the reasons for our poor drivers is an educational system that allows drivers to be licensed much too young. In Europe students receive their power and prestige by attaining good grades. In the United States the majority of students get their power and prestige by the fact that they have a driver's license and a car. Once these students have what to them is essential, good grades and a high school diploma become unimportant.

I encourage you to support this bill and I feel there are four (4) good reasons to do so.

1. We could save some \$8 million of taxpayers money; that is the approximate cost of teaching driver education in our public schools for one year.
2. We, as parents, could save the increased automobile insurance rates due to the high risk factors of young drivers.
3. We could enhance our education system by not providing distractions in the most formative years of young adults.

And finally, the best reason:

4. Statistically most teenage traffic fatalities are due to immaturity and inexperience therefore by raising the minimum driving age we could save much heartbreak and sorrow by reducing teenage death and injury from automobile crashes.

Again, I strongly urge everyone to support this important bill.

Thank you.

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My name is Saretta L. Culver and I reside in Wichita, Kansas. I've made this journey with my my children and other family members to Topeka today to speak to you regarding the driving age in Kansas.

On September 17, 1992 my life was eternally altered. What was a beautiful, sunny, delightful day became a day of tragedy and grief. That which is every parents nightmare became a reality for our family. My strong, healthy, handsome and beloved young son John was killed in an automobile accident on his way to school.

What could be more harmless or innocent than three 15 year old teenage boys on their way to school? Two boys lives were abruptly ended that day and the third was critically injured. All three boys had their restricted licenses.

There are very few states in our country that allow children 14 years old to drive with adults not to mention alone, of these, Kansas laws are the most permissive. We wouldn't think of allowing our 14 year old youths to be able to buy a gun, take drugs or drink, but we do allow them to get behind the wheel of a vehicle. These vehicles, when in the hands of an inexperienced or immature 14 or 15 year old, becomes a lethal weapon.

We lose 40,000 youths a year nationwide to auto accidents and we accept this as a fact of life. It is now time to do something to preserve as many of those lives in Kansas as we can.

As a mother of three children and an involved observer of the growth and developement of children, it is my opinion that the majority of youngsters at 14 are dealing with raging emotions. One minute they are 25 years old and the next they are 2. They are passionate, volatile and not always capable of making rationale, split second decisions.

The act of driving a vehicle requires focus, concentration and hand eye coordination that are not always present in the hormonal adolescent.

As other parents in Kansas, I had assumed that since the law allowed it, it must be alright. Now looking back, taking time to analyze this whole situation, I will not allow my other children to drive or be driven by anyone under the age of 16. There is too much at stake and the ultimate price is too dear.

My son was very athletic. He was an accomplished basketball and baseball player. In a baseball game last year, John injured himself running the bases, but he continued to run home and scored three runs. After crossing homeplate he cooapsed in tears. In the emergency room at the hospital I asked him why he had continued to run home when it was obvious he was hurt. He said, "Mom I just couldn't give up." John had suffered a broken hip that day, but he didn't give up. As my tribute to him, I also will not give up and I am here to work for and support Senator Parkinsons bill.

I know by passing this bill, we won't eliminate all fatal traffic accidents, but it will take thousands of children, who are not quite ready for this responsibility, off our roadways.

I don't come before you today asking for sympathy, I come here today so I may never have to make that long walk from my car to someones front door with a tray of food, a river of tears and words of sympathy for a child that has been lost in a traffic accident. I am here today to respectfully ask that you vote for Bill 114.

By passing this bill we may save only a few lives each year, but if this bill had passed in 1991 my son would be alive today. I can't change what happened to John, but hopefully we can save another family, maybe your own, from a similar fate. The best memorial that John Edward Culver could have, would be for other lives to be saved by the passage of this bill.

Thank you for your consideration,

Saretta L. Culver

*Hello, my name is Staci Miller. I am 14-years old and I will be speaking in favor of the bill to raise the driving age to 16. On September 17, 1992, three 15-year old boys were on their way to school. The three boys then got in a traumatic car accident, killing both John Culver and Paul Copeland. I had known John Culver, one of the passengers, since I was 1-year old. He meant a lot to his friends and family. To you, his death may be just another statistic, but to us, he was a friend. I don't think that most 14 to 15-year olds have the ability to drive in an emergency situation, such as in John and Paul's case.*

*I see an extreme need to pass this bill. Perhaps with the extra one or two years, kids will get the maturity and training needed to drive a car. Driving is not something to be taken lightly, and I do not think that most 14 and 15-year olds are ready to handle it.*

*When I was first asked to speak on this bill, I wasn't sure if I wanted to. I have had a learner's permit, and I like driving. I always had thought of how much fun it would be to drive to school by myself. But after much thought, I decided it is a privilege I am willing to give up, to save my life. From a 14-year old's point of view, I can tell you that driving isn't as easy as I thought it would be. I wouldn't be comfortable, or ready, if I was put in some of the situations that a restricted license might present. Most people consider me responsible, mature, and coordinated for my age, but even I don't think I could handle driving alone at this point in my life.*

*When you give a teenager a restricted license at such a young age, you are putting their lives in their own hands. This can be very dangerous because many kids my age don't realize how easily they could be killed in a car accident. By passing this bill, you will be taking away this life-threatening weapon, and save many lives. So many people have suffered because of the loss of these two teenagers! You can put a stop to this suffering, and you can put a stop to the deaths.*

*In conclusion, I strongly urge you to vote in favor of this bill. If this bill is passed, it could save many lives, and prevent many people from having to grieve over a lost loved one. I have been through it, and believe me, any teenager would much rather give up their restricted license, than give up their life, or the life of a friend.*

Good morning, my name is Angela Culver. As you know, I'm here to ask you to change the law on having a restricted license. My brother John was in a car accident with two other boys and the driver was driving with a restricted license. My brother and the driver were both killed. The worst thing was watching my parents dwell and cope with his death.

I am here today because I don't want other kids to have to watch their parents cope with their child's death. My family waited until it was too late before we realized this law needed to be changed, and I don't want others to make this mistake.

My family and friends have put a lot of time and effort into passing this bill, and I feel it's a worthwhile thing to do.

The problem with 14-15 year olds having restricted license is that they take advantage of it.

Parents are having their children run errands for them, and they are putting convenience ahead of safety. A lot of people are being killed because of this.

My life has changed for the worst because of this accident, and I don't think others should have to go through this. The best thing to do for today's children would be to pass this bill. All I ask of you today is to put children's safety before convenience.

Sincerely,

Angela T. Culver

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My name is Kyle Bauer. I am testifying in opposition to SB 114. I live in Clay County near the small town of Morganville about 8 miles from Clay Center. In Clay County the majority of the students attend Clay Center Community High School.

You are charged with the responsibility of safe guarding of our highways and the welfare of the people of Kansas. The proponents of SB 114 will say it is for the safety of the highways. They will say statistically 14 and 15 year olds are more likely to have accidents, therefore we should not allow them to drive because of their age. If statistics showed people over 70 years old were more likely to have accidents would the same proponents want to remove their driving privileges. No. Logic would tell us to enforce the current driving laws. Some proponents will point to crowded teenage cruising streets late at night and the under aged illegal drivers and tell you to stop this problem by taking all driving privileges from all 14 and 15 year olds. I would point out it is illegal for 14 and 15 year olds now. We don't have a problem with the license age, we have a problem with enforcement of the law and parents that don't have enough strength to tell their children, "No you can take the car out and illegally drive. You shouldn't have legislate parental discipline.

Many times issues in Kansas get labeled as Rural vs Urban issues. That seems very logical to me because the problems and life in rural Kansas is so much different than in urban Kansas.

In urban Kansas, community leaders struggle with crowded streets and highways. In rural Kansas, we struggle with deserted streets and highways. In urban Kansas, school boards struggle with over crowded schools. In rural Kansas, we struggle with continued school closings. In urban Kansas, school boards struggle with building schools fast enough to keep up with growth. In rural Kansas, we struggle with trying to keep a school close enough to our children that they won't ride a school bus more than one hour to school and one hour from school each day. In urban Kansas, parents struggle with prioritize which activities their children will be involved in in rural Kansas, we struggle with prioritizing which activities their children will be involved in. In rural Kansas, we struggle with offering our children a well rounded education and rearing in order that they might be productive well rounded citizens and not "country bumpkins".

I am not sure everyone fully appreciates the subtle difference not allowing 14 and 15 year olds to drive will make in rural high schools.

My wife and I have 3 children; Blake 11, Paige 8, and Abby 3. Blake is an enthusiastic trombone player, and not as enthusiastic piano player. We hope Paige and Abby will take the same kind of interest in a band instrument, though we are encouraging the flute more than the drums. Blake also is interested in baseball, basketball,

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football, and track. Paige enjoys baton and piano. My point is we encourage our children to be involved in school like their mother and I. FFA, FHA, FBLA, Forensics, Class Plays, Sports, Debate, Academic Contests, and School Leadership Roles. Without a doubt, we would have be much less active had our parents had to chauffeur us in early high school. What this change would mean to people like us in rural Kansas is a parent would have to be at the school nearly every night from 4:30 to 9:30 to pick them up. Many mornings they would have to be brought to school early for Marching Band practice and contest work outs. The parents who are fortunate enough that one of them does not have to work outside the home can make this work but the less affluent and vast majority will be forced not to participate.

My wife and I are fortunate that she does not have full time work outside the home. If SB 114 were to be make law, our children will not be deprived of the opportunities to participate. But many of their classmates will. Some of the high school students at Clay Center live more than 30 miles from school. How many of them will be able to continue to be involved? Some will say, "That is the price they have to pay for living in rural Kansas. Should we have to pay one more unnecessary price for living in rural Kansas? Do we want to encourage rural development, and rural living or discourage it? Is SB 114 really the answer?



I will subject the only problem with the law now is in enforcement. If the restricted drivers license laws as they now exist were enforced, there would be no problem. These laws properly address the difference between rural and urban living situations, they just aren't enforced. Proponents of SB 114 will tell you it is unenforceable. I don't agree. Make one change and the current laws work. Increase the fines for offenders. If the risk of getting caught becomes too great, the offenders will disappear. How many offenders do you think we would have with a \$500 or \$1000 fine. How many parents wouldn't be able to tell their teenager, "No", now?

I realize the vast majority of Kansans won't be effected significantly by SB 114 but many times the subtle changes we make have a much bigger effect on lives than we realize. Please don't disregard the situation rural Kansas parents are in. Economics forces continued consolidation schools which I know is an economic necessity but give us a fighting chance to try and maintain our children's current opportunities and education. Some may not feel the after and before school activities are not important, but many of us will contend it is the other half of their education. Don't allow a change like SB 114 to solve one problem and deprive many rural students of half their education.



# PUBLIC POLICY STATEMENT

## HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

**RE: S.B. 114 - Concerning drivers' licenses and instructional permits; concerning the age of applicants for such licenses and permits, and providing for a farm permit.**

March 15, 1993  
Topeka, Kansas

Presented by:  
Paul E. Fleener, Director  
Public Affairs Division  
Kansas Farm Bureau

**Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:**

We appreciate the opportunity to make some comments concerning S.B. 114, a bill which pertains to drivers' licenses and instructional permits and the age of people who may obtain them. S.B. 114 would also create a new farm permit for 14 and 15-year-old drivers who reside on or are employed for compensation on a farm.

For the record, my name is Paul E. Fleener. I am the Director of Public Affairs for Kansas Farm Bureau. We are a general farm organization. We represent farmers and ranchers in the 105 counties of Kansas. We have a policy position relating to drivers' licenses which we would like to share with you. The policy has resulted from study by our members and response by them to questions pertaining to the matters contained in S.B. 114. Our policy says this:

**Drivers Licenses - The Kansas Department of Revenue should provide a drivers license examiner in every county seat at least once a month.**

**We believe Kansas youth should continue to have the opportunity to acquire a restricted drivers license at age 14. The use of a restricted license should be limited to**

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driving to and from work, driving on business related or agricultural errands, and driving to and from school using the most direct route. In urban counties, where driving on agricultural errands and driving to and from school is not the necessity it is in less populated counties, there should be an option for a higher age requirement for a drivers license.

We believe successful completion of a Drivers Education course by age 16 should be a requirement for obtaining a driver license.

We support legislation to require written notification by certified mail to be given to persons whenever their drivers licenses are suspended or reinstated.

As written, we cannot be a proponent of the legislation before you, though it is significantly better than totally removing the opportunity for 14 and 15-year-olds to receive a restricted drivers' license.

We know from several years of experience on this topic that the minimum driving age in Kansas is of great concern to the author of this bill. It is of interest to many citizens. We also know from years of working with the chief sponsor of the bill before you there can be found some common ground to accommodate our policy, which seeks to retain the right of 14-year-old young people to drive automobiles and pickup trucks in connection with agricultural errands and work. That right is reflected in the new farm permit. We believe there can also be an accommodation for the **genuine need** of many 14 and 15-year-old youngsters who live 10, 15, 20 miles from their school, to be able to drive to and from school and into town to catch the activities bus when the school is participating in extra-curricular activities that will take the youngsters away from their school to another community.

S.B. 114 can be shaped to achieve the objectives of the author for the vast majority of young drivers in Kansas and **still maintain the opportunity** for farm youth to obtain a restricted drivers license

until such time as, upon reaching age 16, such youth are eligible to seek an unrestricted license.

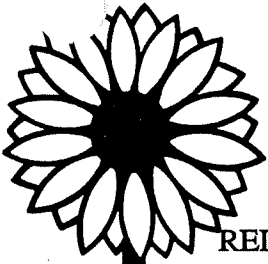
When your committee works this bill we ask that - if you retain the new section on page one relating to the farm permit - you delete lines 30 and 31 requiring the applicant for a farm permit to have completed driver training. Such drivers' education courses are frequently unavailable to 14-year-olds. We appreciate the willingness of Senator Parkinson, author of S.B. 114, to continue to permit those who reside or work on a farm, and who are at least 14-years of age to continue to be able to drive and assist in the farming operation.

We ask that language be crafted to accommodate the need of rural youngsters to drive to and from school and to drive into town to take the activities bus in connection with school-related extra-curricular activities. Some school districts, for the record, do not operate bus systems. In particular, school bus operation does not return youngsters from football games, basketball games, music concerts and other activities after they have returned from some distance away. These youth still need to get home and the best option is for them to have a restricted license authorizing them this type of driving.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee we respectfully request that as you work S.B. 114 you redraft language which will accommodate our concerns.

Thank you for the opportunity to share the views of our farmers and ranchers.

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# Kansans for Highway Safety

## REDUCING THE MINIMUM DRIVING AGE

February 12, 1993

The raising of the minimum driving age has been an issue with some controversy the past several sessions. The removal of privileges can not and should not be taken lightly. Our organization became involved in this issue several years ago and it is our intent to provide information needed to make an informed decision on the issue. Over the years we have conducted public forums on this issue, collected accident statistical data, and conducted statistical surveys in an attempt to evaluate not only the need to raise the minimum driving age but also the problems associated with both the current law and with a higher minimum age. Many of the members of our organization, myself included, were somewhat skeptical of the need for this when we started gathering information. However, we soon became convinced that the need is great.

We heard parents tell us that it was difficult to tell their children they couldn't drive when "the state has told them they can." They also told us of the peer pressure their children were under to drive and in many cases to have their own car. They told us of children having to work, often times at the expense of studies, to have enough money to support their cars. And yes we heard from the farm community about the hardships of not having 14 and 15 year olds driving.

We heard from the children themselves too. In one of the most moving testimonials on this issue I have witnessed, several high school students happened to be visiting the Capital and stop in at one of the early hearings in the House Transportation Committee on this issue. The Committee members asked some of those children their opinions and nearly all of them told about people they knew who had to work to support the expenses of their car. Some told of those who dropped out of school because they had to work too many hours to earn enough money to pay for their cars, the insurance and the maintenance. They told about accidents they had seen because of poor judgement by the 14 and 15 year old drivers. And they told us about the frequent driving by 14 and 15 year olds when they were not complying with the restrictions. And most of all they told us about peer pressure.

We also heard from law enforcement who told us that the current law and the style of restrictions now in place were unenforceable. Since it is very difficult to prove a driver is not going to, from, or during a job, most young people abusing the privilege would use that excuse when they got stopped. The results were usually the lack of sufficient information to support issuing a ticket. In fact many of the times parents would support their stories when they were not true. Of course some people of all ages drive without a license. But those are easily enforced, easily proven in court, and are not subjected to the same degree of community pressure to look the other way.

We also heard from mental health professionals and school professionals. They repeatedly told us that while some fourteen and fifteen year olds possessed the maturity level to handle the responsibility of driving a car the vast majority do not.

We surveyed Kansas High School students in six high schools to determine the average miles driven in each age group and asking about their driving needs and need to work to support a car. These included three urban schools and three rural schools. It is from this survey that we were able to provide a meaningful comparison of accident rates between the age groups.

When looking at accident statistics it is important that consideration be given to the exposure of each age group. While the raw numbers of accidents by 14 and 15 year old drivers is low compared to older teen drivers, there are far fewer 14 and 15 year old drivers and they drive far fewer miles per person on the average. The comparison of accidents per million miles driven is the only accurate way to compare accident rates. The attached charts and graphs show those rates. Note that **the rate of fatal and serious (incapacitating) injury accidents by 14 year old drivers is nearly four times as high as it is for 16 year old drivers.**

One of the arguments we heard against these statistics was that inexperience was the cause of

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the high accident rates. However, further examination reveals that there are about one and a half times as many new drivers among the sixteen year olds as there are fourteen year olds. And the sixteen year olds drive more miles per year. We also looked at the accident statistics of Iowa and Nebraska where the driving age is 16 and found that their new drivers don't have a significantly higher rate as ours do. **This is not an issue of age it is an issue of maturity levels.**

It also is not a matter of being an urban problem and not a rural problem. A study of accident statistics shows that nearly all of the fatal and serious injury accidents involving fourteen and fifteen year old drivers occur on rural roads. This is not to say that there are not rural concerns involved in this issue such as further transportation distances to school and of course the farm issue. However don't forget that Iowa and Nebraska farmers get their farm work done without having their fourteen and fifteen year old children drive.

At one point adding time restrictions became an issue. I have attached a chart showing the time of day the accidents occur with 14 and 15 year old drivers. Most are in the daytime hours. This is understandable because that is when they do most of their driving. Notice they peak immediately before and after school hours. In fact utilizing time restrictions instead of to and from work restrictions would place more of these drivers out during the evening hours and most likely result in an even higher accident rate.

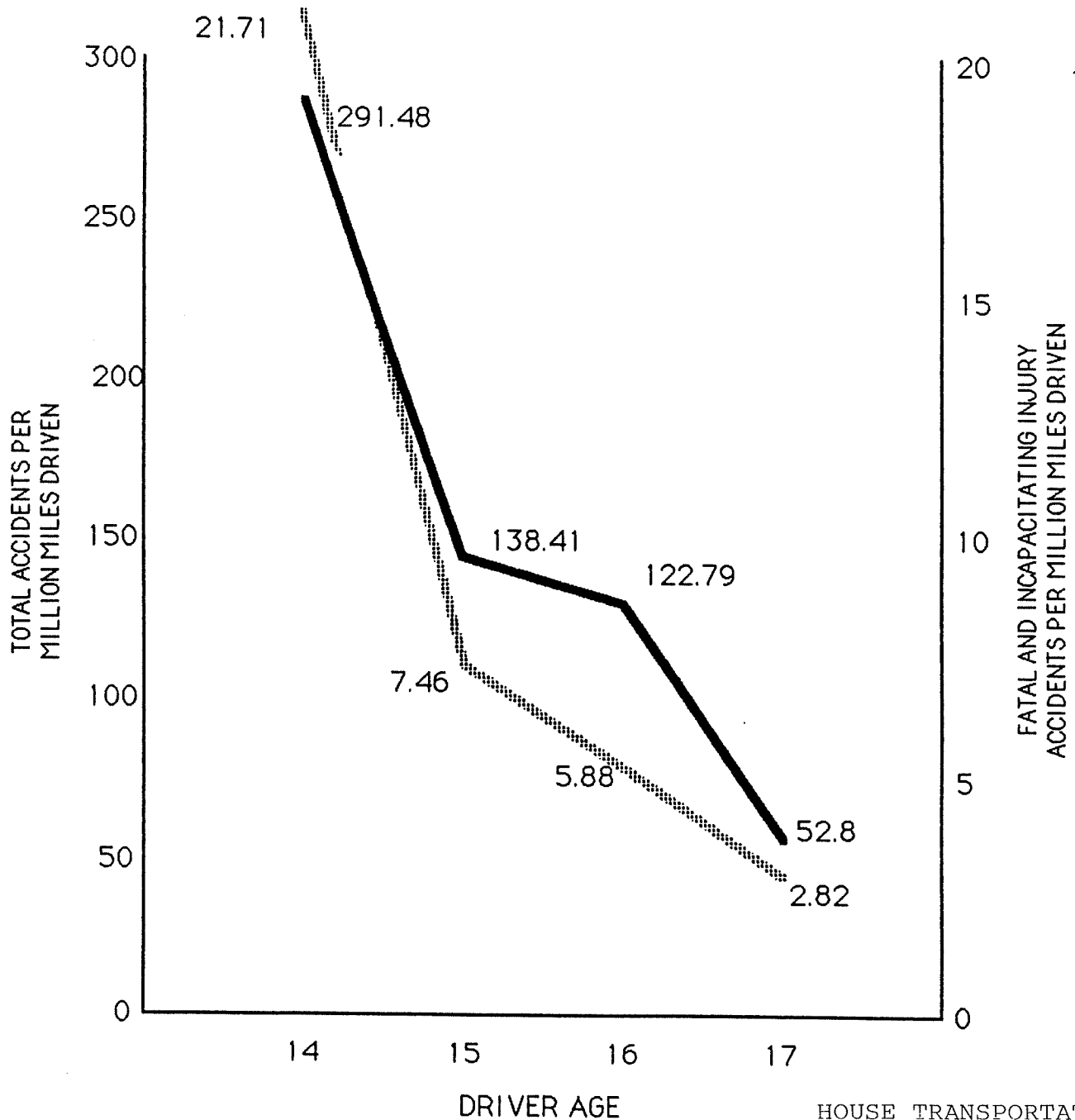
The bottom line of this issue is concern for the health and welfare of our children. Those who are permanently injured or killed will not have the opportunities to pursue the goals and participate in the activities of their dreams. Those that succumb to peer pressure and buy a car and have to work to support the related expenses may not complete or be as successful in school resulting in a loss of productivity potential. We also have spoken to some young adults over the years that regretted the dedication of time for school work being misdirected towards working to support a car. Most have found it impossible to go back and make up for that loss.

We urge your support of the future of Kansas by supporting the potential of physical and academic growth of Kansas youth. By supporting this bill you are reducing the potential of many of our youths needlessly suffering the loss of their future from the tragedy of an automobile collision.

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# KANSAS MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENTS

PER MILLION MILES DRIVEN  
1986 THROUGH 1991



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Attachment 7-3  
3/15/93

ALL ACCIDENTS

FATAL AND INCAPACITATING INJURY ACCIDENTS

PREPARED BY KANSANS FOR HIGHWAY SAFETY  
REVISED 2/10/93

TEENAGE ACCIDENT TOTALS 1986 THROUGH 1991

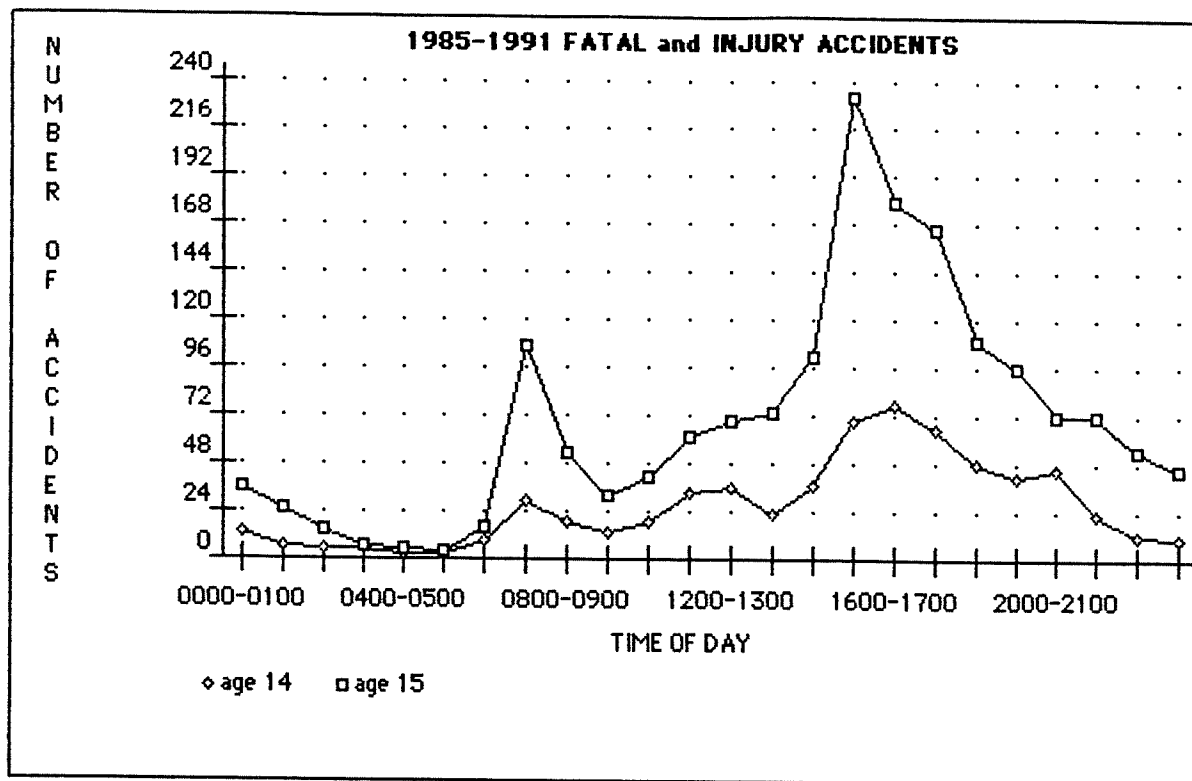
ACCIDENTS PER MILLION MILES DRIVEN 1986-1991

DATE: 2/10/93

AGE	AVG. MILES PER YR PER DRIVER	AVE. NO. OF LICENSE DRIVERS	MILLION MILES DRIVEN/YEAR	AVE ACCIDENTS PER YEAR	ACCIDENTS PER MILLION MILES	AVERAGE FATAL	FATAL AND
						INCAPACITATING INJURY ACCIDENT PER YEAR	INCAPACITATING ACCIDENTS PER MILLION MILES
14	259	5692	1.47	429.67	291.48	32.00	21.71
15	618	16309	10.08	1395.00	138.41	75.17	7.46
16	1389	24314	33.77	4146.83	122.79	198.50	5.88
17	2948	28287	83.39	4403.17	52.80	235.33	2.82
14 & 15		22000	11.55	1824.67	157.94	107.17	9.28
16 & 17		26300	117.16	8550	72.98	433.83	3.70

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Attachment 7-5  
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