

**Statement of Safe Kids Worldwide on Behalf of the  
Safe Kids Coalitions of Ohio  
Anthony Green, Director, Public Policy**

**Hearing of the Transportation, Public Safety, and Homeland Security Committee  
Ohio House of Representatives  
February 11, 2014**

Thank you to Chairman Damschroder for considering HB 204 at the hearing today. I provide this statement on behalf of Safe Kids Worldwide and, most importantly, the 16 coalitions in the state of Ohio. We are child safety educators, pediatricians, fire fighters, nurses, police officers and others with the mission of reducing unintentional injury. We thank Representative Perales for his leadership in advancing this bill.

The United States has been extremely successful in the last decades in making our highways, roads, cars and routes around schools safe for kids from the minute they leave the hospital as an infant with their mom up to the time they are teenagers. There has been a 50% decrease in motor vehicle crash fatalities involving kids up to the age of 19 since 2000. But unintentional injury is the number one killer of kids in the U.S., and auto crashes are still the largest contributor to that number. Teenagers 15-19 years old made up 75% of motor vehicle occupant/driver fatalities in 2011 and mile for mile teen drivers are three times more likely to be involved in a crash compared to older drivers.

We have made great progress in reducing the death and injury rate for kids in cars because of the buckle up campaign and putting kids in child restraints. The most recent game changer is the evolution of graduated drivers' license laws, making them stronger and more effective. And we need to because in 2012, 85 teens aged 13-19 died in motor vehicle crashes in Ohio, and 48% of them were not buckled up.

We support the bill introduced by Representative Rick Perales (R-Beavercreek) because it takes several important steps towards building a culture of teen safe driving in Ohio:

- The bill would restrict provisional license holders from driving between the hours of 10 p.m. - 5 a.m. for all probationary license holders;
- It would restrict, for the first year of driving, the number of passengers to no more than one passenger who must be 21 years of age or older (with a family exception), 34 of the kids who died in 2012 were passengers; and
- It would require all passengers in vehicles driven by provisional license holders to wear seat belts at all times.

For 26 years Safe Kids has been deeply involved in the actions taken to improve child road safety, and we have developed an understanding of this area. When we develop child road safety laws, we are inspired to save the lives of our kids, but it is also important that we are sensitive to the hard job of the men and women in law enforcement. Rep. Perales's bill would reduce teen death and, at the same time, provide police officers with a sensible law that they can realistically enforce. The current Ohio GDL law is unfortunately so confusing that it is a challenge to enforce it and protect kids.

We ask the Committee to favourably vote out the bill which could be called the "Save Our Kids and Make the Jobs of Police Officers Easier Act of 2014." We ask that you use your best efforts to pass it on the House floor, through the Senate and get it on to Governor Kasich's desk. Safe Kids stands ready to help you in this effort in any way we can.