

MEASURE: HB 2264
EXHIBIT: 15
SENATE BUSINESS & TRANSPORTATION
DATE: 4-28-13 PAGES: 2
SUBMITTED BY: RICH HANSON



From: Rich Hanson
Past President and Legislative Liaison
Oregon Driver Traffic Safety Education Association

To: Senate Business and Transportation Committee

Re: Testimony in Favor of HB 2264

Chair Beyer, Vice Chair Starr, and Members of the Committee,

The Board of Directors and members of the Oregon Driver Traffic Safety Education Association (ODTSEA) support and recommend passage of HB 2264. ODTSEA is the largest association of public and commercial driver educators in Oregon. Our goal is improving driver education through teacher training, professional development and curriculum support so that teens get the best driver education possible. We believe HB 2264 is a good bill because it increases access to driver education for students who currently cannot take driver education or do not have a driver education class near them. We believe HB 2264 is a good bill because it improves driver education by giving the ODOT TSD the tools to prescriptively correct providers instead of closing them.

Motor vehicle crashes (MVC) are the leading cause of death and injury for teens. These numbers exist for myriad reasons and the solutions to reduce these numbers involve a complex interaction between the four E s of traffic safety — Engineering, Enforcement, Education, and EMS. We can have the best engineered roads, we can have the best police officers writing myriad driver improvement citations and we can have the best emergency responders to help at crashes. But if we do not have educational opportunities to help students develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes that will help them avoid crashes in the first place we will continue to see this age group statistically over-represented in the MVC mortality statistics.

Students who live in the rural parts of the state have little or no access to driver education because the cost of delivering driver education is too high and the return for the provider is too low to sustain a business or school. Statistically, these teens have a higher risk for serious or fatal crashes because they drive more on rural roads, in more difficult weather conditions and drive greater distances to get from one place to the next. We have to be creative in how we deliver driver education and the proposals for the adaptive strategies in this bill give the department tools to provide driver education through non-traditional means currently unavailable because of legislative and administrative rule.

Last session HB 2140 was introduced to progressively require driver education prior to licensing for all teen drivers. That bill was unsuccessful for several reasons but one of the key objections dealt with students who could not afford the tuition cost of a driver education class. Testimony given at the hearings by several providers stated that they provided scholarships for students in need but the offerings were inconsistent from provider to provider. This bill removes the inconsistency amongst providers and helps

students get the services they need at a price they can afford by augmenting the reimbursement for students who qualify for free and reduced lunch programs.

Ensuring compliance with standards of delivery and curriculum is one of the roles of TSD. The compliance auditor has done an exceptional job identifying areas that providers need to "fix" to bring their program into compliance with the division OARs. There were no tools to motivate providers to comply with the findings except to recommend the provider be closed. It was Draconian and heavy handed to have this as the department's only option. As part of ODTSEA and the Driver Education Advisory Committee I worked on the committee of stakeholders to draft sanctions to be used as a tool to address and correct problems identified during provider compliance audits. Our hope was that if we had clearly defined sanctions that were commensurate with the audit findings that providers would be more motivated to make changes to improve. **Our goal was to improve, not remove.**

It became apparent, however, that the department did not have statutory authority to develop or implement such sanctions so the project was discontinued. This bill gives the department authority to specifically address issues that need correction and makes the sanctions progressive rather than punitive.

HB 2264 addresses several key issues that will make driver education better. ODTSEA wants students to have access to quality driver education consistently delivered from provider to provider. We urge your yes vote on HB 2264.

Should you have any questions or need clarification of my testimony please email me at rich@otsea.org

Thank you for your time,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rich Hanson". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Rich Hanson
Past President
ODTSEA