

Jesse White Promotes National Teen Driver Safety Week at Safety Fair

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SPRINGFIELD - Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White announced that teen driver deaths are down 69 percent since 2007. White made the announcement during National Teen Driver Safety Week, Oct. 20-26 as he joined the Illinois Partners for Traffic Safety at the House of Hope in Chicago.

According to the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), since White's efforts to overhaul the state's graduated driver licensing (GDL) laws took effect in 2008, teen driving fatalities have dropped more than 60 percent. So far this year, there have been 32 teens killed in traffic crashes. Many cite White's nationally heralded GDL program for the dramatic decrease in fatalities.

"The goal has always been to save lives," White said. "We are headed for a decrease in teen driving deaths drop by more than 60 percent in Illinois, but there is still more work to be done. My hope is that teen fatalities will continue to decline."

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for teens (15- to 18-years-old) in the United States, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). In 2017, there were 2,247 people killed in the U.S. in crashes involving a teen driver, according to NHTSA. In 2018, 48 teens have been killed in traffic crashes in 2019, according to IDOT. In 2017, 77 teens were killed in crashes, IDOT reported. In 2007, the year before White's stronger GDL laws took effect, 155 teens were killed in crashes.

More than 500 Chicago-area high school students attended the safety fair which included rollover and driving simulators, a golf cart driving range, motorcycle awareness presentations and a performance by the Jesse White Tumbling Team.

Illinois' GDL program better prepares teen drivers by giving them more time to obtain valuable driving experience while under the watchful eye of an adult, limiting in-car distractions and requiring teens to earn their way from one stage to the next by avoiding traffic convictions.

White emphasized the important roles that parents, teachers and driver education instructors play in preparing safe and responsible teen drivers. State and national traffic safety organizations have praised Illinois' stronger GDL program as one of the best in the nation. To learn more about the state's GDL program, visit www.cyberdriveillinois.com.

White is also reminding the public that this week is a time when parents and caregivers are encouraged to talk to teens about staying safe behind the wheel as well as using seat belts, obeying the speed limit and not texting while driving or driving impaired.