

Giannoulas Recommends Increasing Requirement For Drive Tests From 75 To 79

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SPRINGFIELD, Ill. - Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulas released a report today that recommends adjusting the age requirement for mandatory driving tests from 75 to 79, making Illinois more consistent with other states.

For the past dozen years, Illinois has been the only state in the nation that requires senior drivers to have their behind-the-wheel skills tested on a regular basis. The last two states

that mandated driving tests for seniors did away with them in 2011 (New Hampshire) and 2005 (Indiana).

“As Secretary of State, road safety is a top priority of mine,” Giannoulas said. “Statistics show that seniors are among the safest drivers of any age category. This change would make Illinois driving standards for senior drivers more consistent compared to other states while keeping Illinois as one of the strictest states for license renewals.”

Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) statistics in 2022 included a full year of data relating to the emergency rule that raised the age to 79. IDOT reported virtually no change in crash rates for drivers 75 and older, with a crash rate of 24.39 per 1,000 drivers, which is lower than every age range of drivers between 16 and 69 years old.

“AARP applauds Secretary Giannoulas’ recommendation to permanently reduce the number of older drivers subject to age-based license renewals,” said Ryan Gruenenfelder, Senior Manager of Outreach and Advocacy for AARP Illinois. “Though AARP maintains age alone is not determinative of driving performance, this is a step in the right direction. We look forward to continuing to work with Secretary Giannoulas to identify policy solutions that assess all drivers’ ability to be safe on the road.”

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Illinois General Assembly passed a measure modifying driver requirements in response to the unprecedented public health crisis. The act temporarily raised the age of driving tests from 75 to 79 and was scheduled to expire on January 1, 2023. Lawmakers extended the act to October 1, 2023, and requested the Secretary of State’s office recommend whether the age increase should be made permanent.

There are more than 9.1 million licensed drivers in Illinois. Of those, approximately 280,000 individuals are between the ages of 75 and 78, or 3% of the driving population – who would be impacted by the permanent implementation of this legislation.

In neighboring Wisconsin, where there are no requirements specifically geared toward older drivers, all drivers are required to renew their licenses every eight years and are not required to take a driving test, regardless of age. Crash rates among senior drivers there are nearly identical to those in Illinois.

The act regarding the change only pertained to drivers 75 to 78 required to take the driving tests. Current Illinois law would remain unchanged when it comes to renewing drivers for other age groups:

- All drivers below the age of 81 must renew their licenses every four years.

- Drivers aged 79 and 80 must take a vision and driving test (if their four-year renewal is up during this time period).
- Drivers aged 81 to 86 must take a vision and driving test every two years.
- Drivers aged 87 and older must take a vision and driving test every year.

Giannoulas is urging the state to adopt the rules immediately so seniors would not have to take driving tests after the October 1 deadline and before the requirements are made permanent.

He added that the Secretary of State's office will continue to monitor state driving laws and advocate for changes as long as our roadways remain safe and Illinois drivers, pedestrians and cyclists are protected.

View the [report here](#).