

Governor's Task Force on Teen Safe Driving

Meeting Minutes

Meeting date: February 15, 2008

Time: 10 a.m.

Place: Legislative Office Building, Hartford, Room 2D

Task force members present: Commissioner J. Robert Galvin (Co-Chairman), Charles Hollis, Stephen Simalchik, Robert L. Willsey, Yvette Bello, Maria Cruz, Mario Damiata, Dianne Harnad, Timothy S. Hollister, Brendan T. Campbell, M.D., Albert S. Dabrowski, Sherry Chapman, Rose Marie Cipriano, Susan Naide, Gillian Mosier

Task force members absent: Commissioner Robert M. Ward (Co-Chairman), Stephanie Demchik-Pascual, Joseph Cristalli, Dr. Jack Thaw

Others present: Deputy Commissioner William Ramirez (Department of Motor Vehicles), Raymond Gaulin (CT DOT)

Proceedings:

1) Welcome

The meeting was called to order at 10:06 a.m. by Co-Chair Galvin, who welcomed Dianne Harnad to the Task Force, as well as Deputy Commissioner Ramirez who was sitting in for Commissioner Robert M. Ward.

2) Presentation by Connecticut Public Television (CPTV) on a new documentary, "Parents Behind the Wheel."

Nancy Bauer and Jennifer Boyd spoke to the Task Force regarding a documentary related to teen driving. The documentary, called "Parents Behind the Wheel," is a follow up to the documentary "Teens Behind the Wheel." "Teens Behind the Wheel" placed independently controlled cameras into the cars of 10 newly licensed teens and each of their parents. The cameras were put in the cars for the first six months of driving for the teen. Nancy said eight out of the 10 teens monitored got into accidents in that six-month period.

Nancy said "Teens Behind the Wheel" has been used around the nation to help educate teens and continues to be broadcasted. While producing "Teens Behind the Wheel," producer Jennifer Boyd noticed that teens tended to emulate their parents' driving behaviors.

As a result of this success a follow-up documentary, "Parents Behind the Wheel," was created. On April 15 from 8 p.m. to 9 p.m., CPTV will broadcast a "Teens Behind the Wheel" town meeting. Some Governor's Teen Driving Task Force members have been invited to participate. "Parents Behind the Wheel" will air in late May 2008.

Jennifer said “Parents Behind the Wheel” explores the role parents have in driver education and the challenges the training presents. She added that behavior over the course of a lifetime can influence teens. The documentary will also use driving simulators will look at the differences between trained and untrained drivers.

Jennifer said the town meeting attempts to make a national documentary more local, and the challenges faced by teens, parents and the legal issues involved.

Co-Chair Galvin asked how the teens were chosen for the documentary. Jennifer said driving organizations shared names of newly licensed teens, and those families were contacted, and agreed to participate.

In a follow-up observation, Co-Chair Galvin noted how eight out of 10 teens got into accidents, and if the driving schools steered the producer to certain people.

The driving simulator was chosen based on proximity and used in conjunction with the University of Massachusetts-Amherst. In addition, Jennifer said Travelers is funding the project.

3) Updates from subcommittees on the Task Force.

- Training and Education
 - Jim McPherson reported. He said the subcommittee is making good progress and is currently reviewing Connecticut’s approach to driver’s education. A review was done on the Massachusetts programs that address teen drivers that commit certain moving violations.
 - The subcommittee is also exploring:
 - How to provide greater uniformity of driver training.
 - Training for 18 and 19-year-olds attempting to get their driver’s license for the first time.
 - Driving simulators.
 - Parental orientation sessions.
 - Programs for teens that are ticketed.
 - Driver instructor qualifications.
 - A review of DMV testing procedures.
 - A possible “junior operator” class for violations.
 - Gillian Mosier noted that it might be necessary to have a meeting of all the chairs of the subcommittees.
- Public and Parental Awareness:
 - Yvette Bello reported. The subcommittee is still finalizing the language of their proposed recommendations.
 - The subcommittee has moved to tentatively pass several recommendations, such as:
 - Requiring that parents of drivers under 18 be notified of any moving violation by the teen.
 - Mandate an education training session for learner’s permit holders.
 - Parent educational program for using technology to track teen drivers.
 - Institute an “encouragement” program in high school parking lots to enforce laws.

- Laws, Polices and Regulations:
 - Tim Hollister reported. The subcommittee's first meeting was today.
 - The subcommittee discussed:
 - Revisiting the issue of allowing a sibling in the vehicle during the learner's permit stage driving. He said the issue was deferred to the next meeting, but not changing the short-term recommendation.
 - The learner's permit. It was decided not to change the current age, but the subcommittee is considering recommending to increase the number of days required to hold a permit.
 - Marking vehicles driven by teens that are subject to the GDL laws. Tim said there are many issues with this subject.
 - Coordinating DMV and court system for reporting violations, as well as home 16 and 17-year-olds will be treated within the legal system.
 - In addition:
 - Deputy Commissioner Ramirez reported that the Governor intends to raise the recommended curfew time for teen driver's from 10 p.m. to 11 p.m. Originally, the Task Force had considered moving the time from Midnight to 10 p.m. HB5043 is the act concerning teen drivers.
 - Also, the penalty matrix that was accepted by the Task Force included state statutes related to speeding should include not only 14-219, but should also include 14-218a.
 - There was discussion about identifying vehicles driven by vehicles under 18 – such as the pros and cons to requiring it, new technology to scan license plates for law enforcement, special license plates affixed to vehicles, and overall safety concerns.
- Public Health/Multicultural Health
 - Diane Harnad reported. The subcommittee met for the first time this week. The goal is to complement the work of other subcommittees and have a preliminary goal of come providing recommendations on the collection and analysis of data to help increase safety. The subcommittee wants to access and track over time using indicators such as the types of crashes, risk factors (such as lack of experience), and policies and programs that promote safety behind the wheel.
 - The group is also studying a Massachusetts program – “Operation Every Teen Counts” – that includes checkpoints on school grounds – and the success of the program.
 - The subcommittee is also reviewing language barriers and the hardships caused by certain laws.
 - The subcommittee is reviewing a NHTSA focus group report.
 - Chief Rio said that police chiefs currently support the Task Force's current recommendations, based on input from a meeting yesterday at DMV.

- All final reports from the subcommittees are due on March 28.

4) Task Force Public Forums.

Co-Chair Galvin said there are several public forums scheduled, including ones at Stonington High School on Feb. 25, Hill Regional Career High School in New Haven on Feb. 27 and tentatively for March 10 at Danbury High Schools.

5) Meeting Schedule for Task Force.

The task force will hold its next full meeting on March 14 in Windsor to receive updates from the subcommittees. A meeting has also been scheduled for April 4 to discuss subcommittee final reports.

6) Other Business

Co-Chair Galvin opened the floor to comments from committee members or members of the audience. John Berger, a member of the audience, noted that technology a “black box” type device that can limit an automobile’s capabilities.

Tim Hollister reminded the Task Force that the Governor’s bill will be discussed at a public hearing at the Transportation Committee meeting on Wednesday.

Tim also brought up the issue of high-performance vehicles, and that it should be addressed in some way by the Task Force.

An audience member also brought up the usage of a special ankle bracelet that monitors the use of alcohol consumption.

There was then further discussion on high-performance vehicles that addressed related topics such as the role of the media, vehicle insurance, gender roles in society and other awareness issues.

7) Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:18 a.m.