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Ohio AAA Clubs, new coalition, vocalize support of GDL legislation *HB 343 will save lives*

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INDEPENDENCE, Oct. 25 – Ohio teens, their passengers and other motorists will be safer on the state’s roadways if HB 343 becomes law, says AAA and the newly formed Ohio Teen Driver Coalition.

Proposed by Rep. Tom Raga, Mason, the bill will be heard tomorrow by the Ohio House Transportation, Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee, Wed., Oct. 26 at 4:30 p.m. in Columbus.

The Ohio Teen Driver Coalition, led by AAA, is planning several public service activities to encourage passage of the legislation.

“Our plan is to stress the importance of this legislation, not only to protect young drivers but to make Ohio’s roads safer for everyone,” said Brian Newbacher, director of public affairs for AAA East Central. “Statistics show 15- to 20-year-olds account for only 7 percent of the driving population but are involved in 14 percent of fatal crashes and nearly 20 percent of total crashes. HB 343 reinforces common sense restrictions that protect the teen as well as other drivers on the road.”

If passed, the bill would:

- Increase the minimum age for a permit from 15 and 6 months to 16 years old.
- Increase the minimum age for an intermediate license from 16 to 16 and six months.
- Add a passenger restriction (no more than one non-family member) to the intermediate license stage.
- Increase the length of the intermediate license (extending the night and passenger restrictions) stage from 12 to 18 months.

The Ohio Teen Driver Coalition thus far includes the Advocates for Highway & Auto Safety; Association of Ohio Health Commissioners; Ohio Children’s Hospital Association; the National Safety Council, Central Ohio and Youngstown Chapters; Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), Ohio Chapter; the Ohio Insurance Institute; Think First Injury Prevention; Caring Ladies Increasing Community Knowledge (CLICK); Police Officer’s Safety Council of Summit County, and the Tri-State Trauma Coalition.