

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
77R8431 DWS-D

C.S.S.B. 577
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Criminal Justice
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Committee Report (Substituted)

DIGEST AND PURPOSE

Currently, motor vehicle crashes are the number one killer of Texas teenagers. In 1998, more than 320 Texas teens, ages 15 through 18, died in motor vehicle crashes and another 40,324 were injured. More than 40 percent of teens' fatal crashes occur between 9 p.m. and 6 a.m. Single vehicle collisions represent nearly half of fatal crashes involving 16- and 17-year-old drivers. Those crashes can be linked to driver error, speed, peer passenger distraction, and lack of experience. The crash involvement rate for teens is more than double that for all other Texas drivers. C.S.S.B. 577 creates a graduated driver's license system that restricts teen drivers to certain driving activities during certain times of the day and eases teens into the driving experience by phasing-in driving privileges and minimizing the exposure to high-risk situations.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 521.222(d), Transportation Code, by providing that an instruction permit entitles the holder to operate a type of motor vehicle on a highway while the holder is accompanied by a person occupying the seat by the operator who is 21, rather than 18, years of age or older and is the only person occupying the seat by the operator.

SECTION 2. Amends Chapter 545I, Transportation Code, by adding Section 545.424, as follows:

Sec. 545.424. OPERATION OF VEHICLE BY PERSON UNDER 18 YEARS OF AGE. Prohibits a person under 18 years of age from operating a motor vehicle, other than a motorcycle or moped, unless the person and each passenger in the motor vehicle is secured by a safety belt or child passenger safety seat system. Prohibits a person under 18 years of age, during the six-month period following issuance of an original Class A, B, or C driver's license to the person, from operating a vehicle after 11 p.m. and before 5 a.m. unless the person is accompanied in the same manner required by Section 521.222(d)(2) for operation of a motor vehicle by the holder of an instruction permit. Prohibits a person under 17 years of age who holds a restricted motorcycle license or a moped license from operating a motorcycle or moped after 11 p.m. and before 5 a.m. unless the person is in sight of the person's parent or guardian or with a passenger. Provides that a restriction under this subsection does not apply if the operation of the vehicle is necessary for certain purposes.

SECTION 3. Provides that this Act does not affect the validity or effect of a driver's license, including an instruction permit, issued before the effective date of the Act. Provides that license is governed by the law in effect when the license was issued, and that law is continued in effect for that purpose.

SECTION 4. Effective date: January 1, 2002.

SUMMARY OF COMMITTEE CHANGES

SECTION 1. Deletes proposed SECTION 1 and renumbers proposed SECTION 4 as SECTION 1.

SECTION 2. Deletes proposed SECTION 2 and replaces it with new SECTION regarding the operation of a vehicle by a person under 18 years of age.

SECTION 3. Renumbers proposed SECTION 7 as SECTION 3.

SECTION 4. Renumbers proposed SECTION 8 as SECTION 4.

Differs from As Filed version by deleting proposed SECTIONS 3, 5, and 6.