

SUBJECT TO APPROVAL

Governor's Task Force on Teen Safe Driving

Meeting Minutes

Meeting date: December 7, 2007

Time: 10 a.m.

Place: Legislative Office Building, Hartford, Room 1A

Task force members present: Commissioner Robert M. Ward (Co-Chairman), Commissioner J. Robert Galvin, M.D. (Co-Chairman), Stephen Simalchik, Lt. Col. Peter R. Terenzi, Robert L. Willsey, Bill Ciotto, Dean Pagani, Jim MacPherson, Mario Damiata, Joseph Cristalli, Timothy S. Hollister, Stephanie Demchik-Pascual, Brendan T. Campbell, M.D., Albert S. Dabrowski, Paula Burchard, Sherry Chapman

Task force members absent: Yvette Bello, Tony Cashman, Chief James Rio, Rose Marie Cipriano, Dr. Jack Thaw

Others present: David Preusser, Officer Susan DiVenere

Proceedings:

1) Welcome

The meeting called to order at 10:06 a.m. by Co-Chair Ward. Co-Chair Ward and Co-Chair Galvin took turns to welcome the task force members and thank them for their participation.

2) Introductions of Task Force Members

Each task force member present gave a brief introductory statement.

3) Discussion of Tasks

Co-Chair Ward outlined the tasks that needed to be addressed by the group. These tasks centered on:

- Developing new strategies of awareness and a framework for making the strategies work effectively.
- A re-examination of certain penalties associated with violations with which teens are frequently charged.
- The creation of a partnership of interested parties statewide that work in targeted and different ways to broadcast the same message about teen driving safety to both parents and teens.

Co-Chair Ward noted that the task force has short term and long-term challenges, and that the task force should be mindful of the deadlines required by the state legislature to propose bills.

4) Discussions of Teen Driving – Issues and Overview

David Preusser, the task force's consulting resource, gave a presentation that focused on trends in accidents involving teenage drivers. Mr. Preusser said that national data shows that crash rates for teens are very high during specific periods. Those periods noted by Mr. Preusser were 1) the first few months a teenager earns a driver's license, 2) driving at night, 3) driving with teenage passenger(s) in the vehicle, 4) driving after drinking alcohol.

In addition, Mr. Preusser highlighted Connecticut crash data that noted 1) crash rates are 50 percent higher for 16 and 17-year-olds than the crash rate for drivers between the ages of 35 and 49, 2) approximately 75 percent of 16-17 year-olds were judged at fault in crashes compared to only 45 percent of drivers ages 35 to 49, 3) when a teen driver is at fault, the most common reasons are following too closely and speed, 4) many teen crashes occur between the hours of 9 p.m. and midnight, 5) teen drivers (16-19) die in fatal motor crashes at a rate that is three times the rate for drivers ages 35 to 49, 6) teen drivers are involved in fatal crashes at a rate which is two to three times the rate for drivers ages 35 to 49.

Mr. Preusser concluded that a delay in licensing, a graduated licensing system and seatbelt usage were known to work best to reduce teenage driving crashes.

Discussion continued on the various issues the task force members would like to investigate. Those issues included: the influence of alcohol on teens; the legal driving age; potential targeted public relation campaigns; how to reach out to parents; and new technology to help parents monitor teens while driving.

Mr. Preusser noted a study conducted in California that showed that the two most common reasons for fatal crashes involving teen drivers were the influence of passengers on the driver and the tendency for the driver to "over correct" a problem.

In addition, the task force requested that a Web site be developed specifically for task force members to communicate and share information. The Corporate and Public Relations Office of the Department of Motor Vehicles will develop the Web site.

5) Establish Calendar of Meetings

Mr. Pagani suggested that the task force members should form a short-term sub-committee to review current laws and to propose law changes to meet legislative deadlines. The task force agreed to form the sub-committee. Mr. Hollister was chosen as the chair of the sub-committee. In addition, Dr. Campbell, Mr. MacPherson, Mr. Pagani and Mr. Preusser volunteered to be members of the sub-committee. Co-Chair Ward asked that any information for the sub-committee should be sent to Mr. Hollister.

Co-Chair Ward said more sub-committees may be formed as needed.

Co-Chair Ward asked committee members to e-mail any ideas for future meetings to himself, Co-Chair Galvin, or Bill Seymour of DMV.

Task force members discussed when the group would hold a forum to give the public an opportunity to give input regarding the issue of teen driving. The task force agreed to hold a public forum sometime in early February 2008.

Co-Chair Ward said task force members may invite experts to make presentations to the group and to let him or Co-Chair Galvin know in advance.

The next meeting of the task force is scheduled January 11, 2008 at 10 a.m. at the Legislative Office Building in Hartford. A meeting of the task force has also been scheduled for January 25, 2008.

6) Adjournment

The task force adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

