



House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 208

January Session, 2001

House Bill No. 6477

House of Representatives, April 10, 2001

The Committee on Transportation reported through REP. COCCO of the 127th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the bill ought to pass.

AN ACT INCREASING THE TRAINING REQUIREMENTS FOR NEW DRIVERS OBTAINING A LICENSE.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Subsection (d) of section 14-36 of the general statutes is repealed
2 and the following is substituted in lieu thereof:

3 (d) (1) No motor vehicle operator's license shall be issued to any
4 applicant who is sixteen or seventeen years of age unless the applicant
5 has held a learner's permit and has satisfied the requirements specified
6 in this subsection. The applicant shall (A) present to the commissioner
7 a certificate of the successful completion in a public secondary school,
8 a state vocational school or a private secondary school of a full course
9 of study in motor vehicle operation prepared as provided in section 14-
10 36e or of training of similar nature provided by a licensed drivers'
11 school approved by the commissioner, including, in each case,
12 successful completion of not less than [eight] twelve clock hours of
13 behind-the-wheel, on-the-road instruction, two hours of which shall be

14 after sunset; (B) present to the commissioner a certificate of the
15 successful completion of a course of not less than five hours relative to
16 safe driving practices, including a minimum of two hours on the
17 nature and the medical, biological and physiological effects of alcohol
18 and drugs and their impact on the operator of a motor vehicle, the
19 dangers associated with the operation of a motor vehicle after the
20 consumption of alcohol or drugs by the operator, the problems of
21 alcohol and drug abuse and the penalties for alcohol and drug-related
22 motor vehicle violations; and (C) pass an examination which shall
23 include a comprehensive test as to knowledge of the laws concerning
24 motor vehicles and the rules of the road and an on-the-road skills test
25 as prescribed by the commissioner. At the time of application and
26 examination for a motor vehicle operator's license, an applicant sixteen
27 or seventeen years of age shall have held a learner's permit for not less
28 than one hundred eighty days, except that an applicant who presents a
29 certificate under subparagraph (A) of this subdivision shall have held a
30 learner's permit for not less than one hundred twenty days and an
31 applicant who is undergoing training and instruction by the
32 handicapped driver training unit in accordance with the provisions of
33 section 14-11b shall have held such permit for the period of time
34 required by said unit. The Commissioner of Motor Vehicles shall
35 approve the content of the safe driving instruction at drivers' schools,
36 high schools and other secondary schools. Such five hours of
37 instruction may be included as part of or in addition to any existing
38 instruction programs. Any fee charged for the course required under
39 subparagraph (B) of this subdivision shall not exceed twenty-five
40 dollars. The commissioner may waive any requirement in this
41 subdivision, except for that in subparagraph (C) of this subdivision, in
42 the case of an applicant sixteen or seventeen years of age who holds a
43 valid motor vehicle operator's license issued by any other state,
44 provided the commissioner is satisfied that the applicant has received
45 training and instruction of a similar nature.

46 (2) The commissioner may accept as evidence of sufficient training

47 under subparagraph (A) of subdivision (1) of this subsection home
48 training as evidenced by a written statement signed by the spouse of a
49 married minor applicant, or by a parent, grandparent, foster parent or
50 the legal guardian of an applicant which states that the applicant has
51 obtained a learner's permit and has successfully completed a driving
52 course taught by the person signing the statement and that the signer
53 has had an operator's license for at least four years preceding the date
54 of the statement or, if the applicant has no spouse, parent,
55 grandparent, foster parent or guardian so qualified and available to
56 give the instruction, a statement signed by the applicant's stepparent,
57 brother, sister, uncle or aunt, by blood or marriage, provided the
58 person signing the statement is qualified.

59 (3) If the commissioner requires a written test of any applicant
60 under this section, the test shall be given in English or Spanish at the
61 option of the applicant, provided the commissioner shall require that
62 the applicant shall have sufficient understanding of English for the
63 interpretation of traffic control signs.

64 (4) The Commissioner of Motor Vehicles may adopt regulations, in
65 accordance with the provisions of chapter 54, to implement the
66 purposes of this subsection concerning the content of safe driving
67 instruction at drivers' schools, high schools and other secondary
68 schools.

TRA *Joint Favorable*

The following fiscal impact statement and bill analysis are prepared for the benefit of members of the General Assembly, solely for the purpose of information, summarization, and explanation, and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either House thereof for any purpose:

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact: Cost

Affected Agencies: Department of Motor Vehicles

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

State Impact:

This legislation increases the number of hours a new driver must participate in driver's education classes from eight to twelve, and requires that two of these hours be after sunset. As a result, the Department of Motor Vehicles will need to update forms, pamphlets and driving manuals (for both new drivers and driving schools) to incorporate this change which has an estimated cost of \$50,000. However, if the DMV holds off on the update and reprinting until all forms, pamphlets and manuals are exhausted and the effective date remains at 10/1/01, the DMV would have sufficient time to plan ahead for the cost to be covered within available resources.

Municipal Impact:

Drivers' education courses are fee based therefore there is no impact upon the costs of local and regional school districts.

OLR Bill Analysis

HB 6477

AN ACT INCREASING THE TRAINING REQUIREMENTS FOR NEW DRIVERS OBTAINING A LICENSE.**SUMMARY:**

This bill increases from eight to 12 the number of hours of behind-the-wheel, on-road instruction a 16- or 17-year old must receive before qualifying to take the driver's license examination. At least two of the 12 hours behind the wheel must be after sunset. (See COMMENT)

Currently, all 16- and 17-year olds who receive driver training through a high school driver education program or a licensed commercial driving instruction school must get a minimum of 30 hours of classroom instruction; eight hours of on-road, behind-the-wheel instruction; and complete a five-hour safe driving course that includes a two-hour component on the effect of alcohol and drug use on driving. If trained under a home-training certificate by a qualified adult relative, the person signing the certificate must certify the minor received comparable training, but the minor must still complete the five-hour safe driving course.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2001

COMMENT***Related Law Not Changed by the Bill***

A related law, CGS § 14-36e, specifies the minimum requirements for driver education courses of at least 30 hours classroom instruction and eight hours behind the wheel. The eight-hour minimum is not changed to 12 hours by the bill. Since it is a minimum, it does not conflict with the bill's requirements, but probably should be changed for consistency.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Transportation Committee

Joint Favorable Report
Yea 28 Nay 0