

## House Republican Press Release

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### **HOUSE APPROVES LEGISLATION CREATING NEW TEEN DRIVING RESTRICTIONS**



HARTFORD- On Wednesday, April 9, the House of Representatives approved legislation supported by State Representative Arthur O'Neill, R-Southbury, that would create new restrictions for teen drivers. House Bill 5748, which Rep. O'Neill worked on as Ranking Member (House Republican Leader) of the Legislature's Judiciary Committee, was approved in a 109-33 vote.

According to the National Center for Health Statistics, motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death among fifteen to twenty year olds. Since August 2007, there have been several high profile fatalities involving teen drivers in Wolcott, Bristol and Orange.

The bill approved today by the House of Representatives includes provisions that would: Increase penalties for those drivers who are charged with racing, reckless driving, speeding and cell phone use; Require parents or guardians to attend 2 hours of driver training; Change the curfew of 16 & 17 year olds from midnight to 11:00 pm; Double, from 20 to 40 hours, of behind the wheel training that must include on the road training; Require seatbelts be worn by all passengers of vehicles being driven by 16 & 17 year olds. (Current law only requires front seat passengers and children in booster seats to wear seat belts)

“This legislation was drafted in response to a wave of recent fatal accidents involving teen driving,” said Rep. O'Neill. “While some people advocated raising the driving age, it was determined it is best not to take away driving privileges for all 16 year olds. Many teenagers are prepared for the responsibility and the bill is designed to address issues with new drivers who have the greatest difficulty demonstrating their capacity to drive.”

House Bill 5748 now goes to the State Senate for consideration.