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Chicago Sun Times

March 28, 2007

Senate OKs more training, curfew for teen drivers

SPRINGFIELD -- A proposal to tighten the rules for teen drivers earned overwhelming support Tuesday in the state Senate.

Under the bill, teenagers would need nine ticket-free months of driving with a learner's permit before they could receive a license. It is backed by Secretary of State Jesse White. The proposal includes a 10 p.m. weekday and 11 p.m. weekend driving curfew for drivers under 18 except for teens driving with an adult or going to and from work or school. The proposed law is the brainchild of a task force White convened to address fatal auto accidents involving teen drivers.

The bill, which the Senate passed 54-2, must be approved by the Illinois House and Gov. Blagojevich before becoming law.

"These crashes are the number one cause of death among our adolescents," said state Sen. John Cullerton (D-Chicago), the bill's sponsor. "This legislation . . . would give our state one of the most comprehensive graduated licensing programs in the nation and make us a model for other states."

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