

Face Off

# Should the legal driving age be changed?

*Yes.*

**Ben Hopper**  
Editor-in-Chief

You know that scenario where everyone knows the solution to a problem, but nobody wants to solve it until the problem no longer affects them? Well, here we go.

The driving age should be higher. I'm not sure how high, but probably at least 18 years old.

To start us off: opponents to this age-raise really only have two adequate points, the first of which is that the driving age's current position allows for teen freedom at the peak of adolescence.

While this is a fair point, it is also unnecessary. Believe it or not, there are more ways to move around than via automobile. Purchase a bike, use your legs or if you really have a need for speed buy an ATV. Trust me, for the same amount of money you can get yourself a way cooler bike than that Dodge minivan you scored last year.

The second point certain indi-

viduals often make is one of teen transportation. People argue that the transportation of their child would be much more difficult without the car. Alas, we make it back to the same point: walk to school, ride a bike or (cue gasp) ride the bus.

This is literally what buses are for. They drive so you do not have to. I understand that this might not work for everyone, depending on how far away one lives from OHS or when one's soccer practice is, but there sure are a lot of people who could easily ditch the car for a more athletic, planet-friendly method.

Now it is time for my rebuttal.

According to the Association for Safe International Road Travel, almost 8000 United States citizens are killed every year in crashes involving persons ages 16-20. This is not solely by chance; the average teen mind is not yet at a suitable level of maturity to be given the reins.

These teens were just given cell phones and are now given cars—did we not expect them to try to multitask on the road? There's now no faster way to catch Charizard and head to lacrosse practice si-

multaneously.

Another point I'm just going to slip through the cracks is one of teen rationality. According to NPR News, the adult brain is not fully developed until the age of 25—long after little Jimmy started zooming around town. I mean, who really needs a prefrontal cortex anyway?

My last point of attack relates to community safety. Everyone in the Okemos community knows that the single greatest location of danger in the area is none other than the high school parking lot.

Admit it, you have probably peed your pants trying to maneuver your way in and out. Everyone is either going 7 mph or 50 mph with little to no wiggle room in between. I have honestly never seen a more densely packed area of offensive drivers.

If these kids cannot even maintain a reasonable GPA, why should we trust them to maintain a steering wheel?

It's probably not going to happen, but why should it not?

*No.*

**Pallash Mishra**  
Staff Reporter

Not only does getting a license signify freedom and a sense of responsibility, in some cases having a car is extremely important for students to juggle all the activities that come along during high school.

There are many reasons why people say having a license at 16 is important. For teens who live far from school, the morning commute can be extremely tricky. Many parents work and trying to drop off your kid while making it to work on time each morning sometimes isn't feasible. For these teens, driving to and from school each day may be their only option. A number of teens also find themselves getting their license as a means to commute to their new jobs. As a large percentage of young adults get their first jobs around 16 or 17 years of age, raising the driving age would

cripple some students' ability to earn money.

"I live in Lansing, which is around 15 minutes away from the high school. I've been driving since the spring of my sophomore year and working since my junior year. If I couldn't drive until I was 18 or something, I feel like I wouldn't have been able to do the things I have," Xavier Bodary (12) said.

Bodary, like many students, has had the need for a license for years.

"I do think that setting the driving age at 16 is reasonable, because by that time you start having more responsibilities and driving really helps me fulfill those," Bodary said.

Recently there has been talk of increasing the driving age. The danger of teen drivers is first among the arguments proposed. While I'm not here to argue that rookie drivers are not inferior and less safe than their more experienced counterparts, the reason for the higher risk is not because new drivers are mostly teens but

rather than... not, is a... of experi... org, the... crashes... error in... had not... does not... is 16, 18... get their... I realiz... to keepi... are steps... fore reso... altogether... make the... gram far... that we... drivers t... before m... also intro... teens mo... gers like... driving w... While... involv... a new dri... take to m... of right... able to dr...

## GETTING YOUR LICENSE

STEP 1



### Segment 1

Despite being long, tedious and overall a generally bad time, Segment 1 of driver's education classes are essential to a teen about to embark out onto Okemos Road for the first time. After watching more educational films than you ever have before and going out driving a few times, one will take the written test and be set free.

### Segment 2

After going to the Sec. of State to get your Level 1 license and completing the required practice hours, the 3-day process of Segment 2 rears its ugly head. This is far less cumbersome than the first segment, and you can expect to be released ready to take your road test.



STEP 2

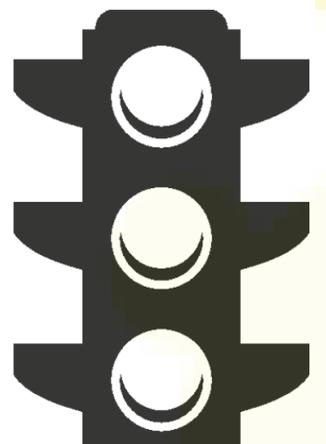
### The Road Test

The day has finally come: you're about to take your road test and become a full-fledged adult. It may seem intimidating, but if you've practiced, it will be a breeze. Once passing you are now a functioning member of society with a legitimate driver's license. Be safe!

STEP 3



## Driving an



## For driving teen

**Sophie Alegi**  
Staff Reporter

Earning your driver's license is an important rite of passage in every teenage life.

After months of supervised driving and restricted permits, you are finally allowed to drive by yourself, without your mother / father / older sister / older brother telling you every single thing you're doing wrong! What a joy! What freedom!

Unfortunately, the danger of car

accidents looms be...

licensed teenage driv... The Centers for... and Prevention has... vehicle crashes are t... of death for U.S. tee... Furthermore, the... leased statistical dat... teenage driving.

Crash risk is parti... ing the first months... risk of motor vehicle... among 16 to 19-year... any other age group.

They are nearly t... likely than drivers a...

## Opinion

# aged?

# Driver's education classes need major overhaul

Amaeka Effiong

Staff Reporter

Around the U.S., as students near the age of 16 they have the opportunity to enroll in driver's education classes. In Michigan specifically, anyone can begin to learn how to drive once they are 14 years and eight months old.

After recently taking a driver's education course this past year, I can confidently say that there are many flaws to the system, especially with the learning aspect of it.

Information is hastily poured into the minds of young and distracted individuals who only need a 70 percent on the exam to pass Segment One. The first part of the course is crammed into a 12 day period and taught with outdated videos and methods of teaching. The second part of the course is a mere three days that pretty much reiterates topics that were already covered in Segment One—or are just basic common sense.

Julia Mocny (10) finished taking driver's ed a few weeks ago and has many problems with it as well.

"[They] play videos [and] give us a study sheet that has the answers to the test questions," Mocny said. "I don't think that's very effective."

Although the simplicity of the class seems nice at the time, the end result can often turn dangerous.

For example, on my very first day actually driving a vehicle, I was instructed to go on to a busy road, without any real experience or practice.

I was unaware and unprepared for the dangers of the road and made many mistakes that could have ended badly if it were a busier day. The presence of an adult did not make a difference, as he simply sat there and gave irritated

commands to my partner and me.

Despite the mediocrity of driver's education class, it is highly enforced all over the world and can be considered a somewhat helpful course that is better than nothing.

However, the classes are made to seem as though everyone needs to have knowledge about the road before they ever operate a vehicle no matter what, but if you are already 18 that is a different story.

For some reason, 18-year-olds in Michigan get to skip drivers education and go straight to the road test. This rule is another example of how poorly the system is run.

Once you turn 18, you do not just magically gain all relevant driving information. Road readiness does not come with age, so it should not be treated as though it does.

Allowing anyone over the age of 18 to take the road test without any prior training is just as threatening as letting 14-year-olds drive with a "trained" adult in the car.

There is so much room for improvement in Michigan driver's education courses, and one simple way that they could start is by updating the curriculum.

There is no reason why students should still be taught with videos from the 90s and early 2000s because times have changed.

Mocny agrees that driver's education in Michigan could be changed for the better.

"What they're teaching us doesn't need to be three weeks, four days, [and] a week for two hours. I don't think that it requires that much time, and I think that the fact that the state of Michigan makes it that long [makes people] kind of see it as a joke," Mocny said. "There is no way that what you need to know in order to be able to drive needs that many hours in a classroom. You need way more hours actually out on the road."

Mocny also believes that more attention should be given to skills that driver's actually

use rather than the memorization of facts and definitions.

"Probably 75 percent of people who failed their driving test probably failed it on parking and that's because [we] practice parking maybe three times," Mocny said.

While leaders look to improve our country as a whole, driver's education certainly deserves a spot on their list of things to refine.

As for the 18-year-old dilemma, I believe that everyone who is planning to drive should go through classes. Improved classes.



# and You

## Driver Horror Stories

Brandon Gordon

### Carlis Rios (12):

Well the driver instructor lady was really mean, and I'm not a good driver already, but she made me even more anxious. I failed it because there was this old lady on a scooter and she was going through the crosswalk, and I went anyways. I could have hit her, but I didn't. She shouldn't have tried to walk in the first place.

### Abdullah Hashsham (12):

It was awful. My parents are literally the worst teachers. They taught me how to drive incorrectly and when I failed my test they got mad at me for not intuitively knowing the rules, even though I learned everything from them. They said stuff like "You can go over speed limit, that's okay," and "blindspots don't exist."

### Brandon Clark (12):

On my drivers' test I was stopped at a light in the left turn lane. So, when the light turned green, I was kind of zoned out so I started to turn the wheel a little bit and then the drivers' instructor started to flip out. I was kind of confused as to why. When it was clear, he made me go back to the starting point and he told me I failed and I was like, 'what the hell.'

### Christian Lundy (12):

On my drivers' test, the first test is parking. And I was doing alright until the parallel parking spot when I sort of blanked out and I realized, 'I have no idea how to do this.' So I just went for it. I hit a cone, then another cone, and at that point I realized—I took an L. I knew I had failed the test.

# Speed, speed is not always key

before the newly-  
ver.  
Disease Control  
stated that motor  
the leading cause  
ns.  
y have also re-  
a on the risks of  
cularly high dur-  
of licensure; the  
crashes is higher  
olds than among  
three times more  
ged 20 and older

to be in a fatal crash.  
However, crashes are not the most investigated traffic violation in Okemos.  
According to Meridian Township Police Records Unit Supervisor Cindy Cummings, the most common traffic violation from January 1, 2017 to January 1, 2018 is speeding. There was only a single fatal car crash in Meridian Township in 2017.  
In 2017, the total number of traffic incidents recorded by Meridian Township Police were a staggering 1372. This included 916 crash investigations— which averages at about

three crashes per day.  
Crashes are classified as personal injury, property damage (no injuries) and hit-and-run crashes. 755 of those crashes did not cause injury, but 159 crashes resulted in injury to those involved.  
Injuries can fall into several categories, ranging from the simple complaint of pain, to those that are life threatening or even fatal, according to brochures posted on the Meridian Township Police Department website.

