

GRADUATED DRIVER LICENSING SURVEY: TIMING OF LICENSURE & REASONS FOR DELAY AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE IN WASHINGTON STATE

Alison Radford, Senior Research Analyst

Haiping Zhang, Research & Data Analytics Administrator

Washington State Department of Licensing

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PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

1. Background & Context

- a) Washington's current GDL system
- b) Licensing trends & traffic safety implications of missing the GDL window
- c) Prior AAA survey research
- d) Motivation for conducting a Washington GDL Survey

2. Washington GDL Survey

- a) Survey design
- b) Respondent demographics & licensure status
- c) Survey findings – reasons for delay
- d) Survey findings – interest in potential new programs, response to potential future restrictions

3. Conclusions & Key Takeaways

4. Questions

BACKGROUND & CONTEXT – WASHINGTON'S CURRENT GDL SYSTEM

Learner Stage

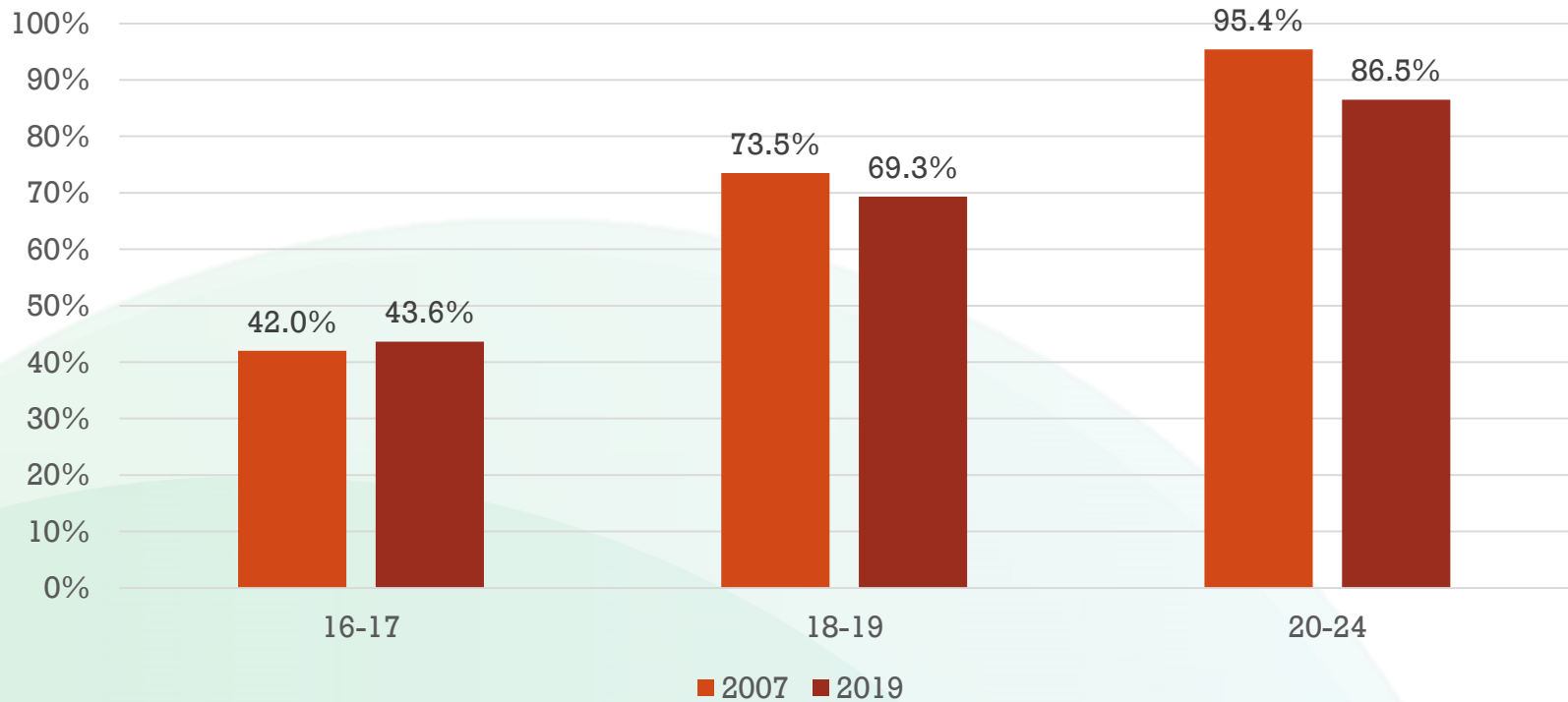
- Minimum age 15 if enrolled in DTS (otherwise 15½)
- Minimum holding period 6 months
- Complete 50 hours (at least 10 at night) of supervised driving
- Complete an approved driver education course
- Pass knowledge and driving test

Intermediate Stage

- Passenger restrictions:
 - First 6 months – no passengers younger than 20 except for family
 - Next 6 months – no more than 3 passengers younger than 20
- No driving from 1 am to 5 am for first 12 months of license
- No wireless device use (including Bluetooth devices)

BACKGROUND & CONTEXT – LICENSING TRENDS IN WASHINGTON STATE

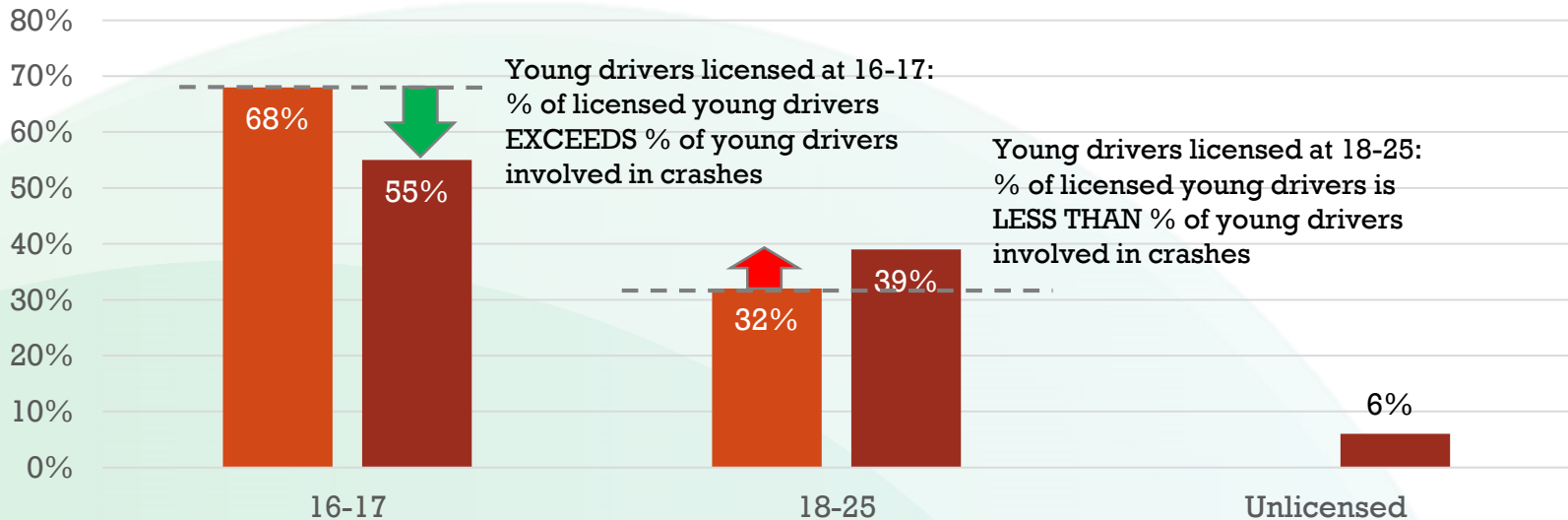
% of the population with a driver's license by age,
2007 compared to 2019



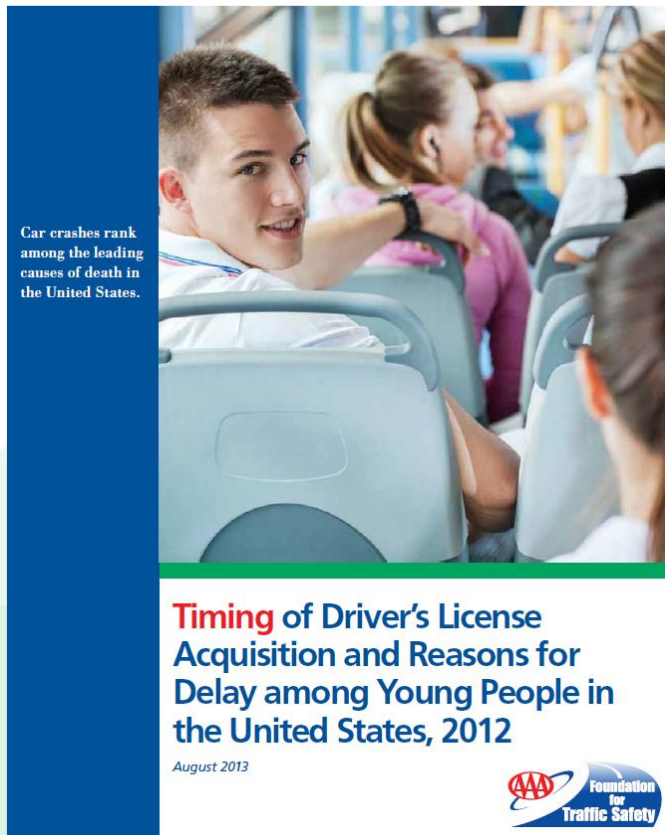
BACKGROUND & CONTEXT – TRAFFIC SAFETY IMPLICATIONS FOR MISSING THE GDL WINDOW

% of all young drivers (age 16-25) vs. % of young drivers involved in crashes by age when first licensed (2017 licensed driver and crash data)

- % of licensed young drivers by age when first licensed
- % of young drivers involved in traffic crashes by age when first licensed



BACKGROUND & CONTEXT – AAA SURVEY RESEARCH



AAA surveyed 1,039 18-20 year olds in the U.S. in 2012

Results found large social & economic disparities in licensing rates.

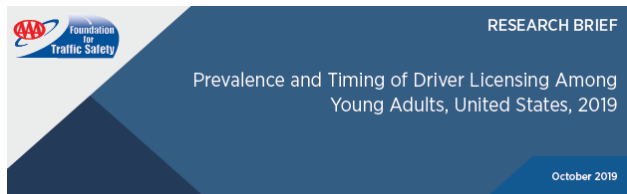
Delaying licensure more common when:

- Respondents lived in low income households
- Respondents were black or Hispanic

Most respondents cited reasons related to cost or opportunity for delaying licensure.

Few cited GDL as a reason for delaying licensure.

BACKGROUND & CONTEXT – AAA SURVEY RESEARCH



Obtaining a driver's license was once widely regarded as a "rite of passage" for teenagers in the United States. However, only 36% of young people surveyed in 2012 by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety reported having obtained their first driver's license at or before the age of 16 and only 54% reported having done so before they turned 18 (Tefft et al., 2013). At that time, it was not clear whether the apparent decrease in teen licensing was a temporary effect of the Great Recession of 2007-2009 – the effects of which lingered for several years – or whether the prevalence of teen driver licensure would remain at that level. Some wondered if rates of licensing among young people might decrease further due to broader societal trends.

To investigate this phenomenon, the AAA Foundation in 2019 surveyed a nationally-representative sample of 1,402 young adults ages 18-24 to estimate the proportion of young adults nationwide who possess a driver's license, the ages at which they first obtained their license, and factors associated with the timing of licensure. Results show that an estimated 41% of this cohort received their first driver's license at or before age 16, 19% at age 17, and 28% at age 18 or older. An additional 4% had a learner's permit, and 8% have neither a license nor a permit. This Research Brief presents current, detailed information on the prevalence and timing of licensure among young adults ages 18-24 in relation to demographic characteristics and other factors.

METHODS

An online questionnaire was administered to a representative sample of young adults ages 18-24. Respondents were recruited from two pre-recruited survey research panels maintained by the research firm Ipsos: YouthPulse and Knowledge Panel. These panels comprise samples of U.S. residents ages 15-24 (YouthPulse) and 18+ (KnowledgePanel) recruited by mail using address-based sampling methods, with the U.S. Postal Service's Delivery Sequence File as the sampling frame. The sample recruited from these panels for the present survey was stratified to obtain greater geographic diversity than would be expected in a simple random sample of the U.S. population. This ensured an adequate sample of respondents from rural states and states with younger licensing ages to obtain statistically reliable estimates of licensing in these areas to be able to compare them to the rest of the country.

Data were collected from Aug. 7 through Sept. 3, 2019. A total of 3,149 participants enrolled in Ipsos's YouthPulse and KnowledgePanel research panels were invited to complete the survey; 1,402 responses were obtained. The median time taken to complete the survey was eight minutes.

Respondents were first asked whether they had obtained a driver's license. Licensed respondents were then asked to confirm that their license allowed them to drive without another licensed driver in the vehicle (to ensure they had a license rather than a learner's permit). They were then asked to report the age at which they obtained their first license. The small percentage (1.6%) of respondents who did not remember the specific age were asked whether they obtained their first license before age 18.

Because the study sought to investigate factors that influence when young people obtain their first driver's license, respondents were also asked several questions about their life when they had just turned 17 years old. The age of 17 was used here because it is the youngest age at which a person is old enough to have obtained a license in every U.S. state.

Questions included the state in which they lived, whether they lived in an urban or rural area, who else lived in their household at the time and how many of these people were drivers. Respondents were also asked about their agreement or disagreement with several statements about their attitude toward driving when they were 17.

AAA conducted a similar survey in 2019, of 1,402 people age 18-24 in the U.S.

This survey found similar results as the 2012 survey.

Delaying licensure more common when:

- Respondent lives in a city
- Respondent from a less affluent family
- Respondent has no education beyond high school, or completed some college but no longer enrolled

BACKGROUND & CONTEXT – WASHINGTON GDL SURVEY

- **DOL & WTSC initiated this survey to obtain current Washington-specific data on reasons why young people delay licensure**
- **Survey results will be used to:**
 - **Benchmark current attitudes and behaviors regarding the delay of licensure in Washington State**
 - **Identify potential program changes, offerings or policies that can mitigate the root causes of delays in licensure**
 - **Provide rationale for policy/program changes to key decision makers**

WASHINGTON GDL SURVEY – SURVEY DESIGN

Online survey given to 1,050 Washington residents age 16-24 in May 2020

Survey questions are in 3 main sections:

1. Demographics (age, gender, ZIP code, ethnic/racial identity, household size), select personality characteristics, and driver license status
 - a) If currently licensed, they are asked at what age they received their license.
 - b) If not currently license, they are asked if they intend to get a license by age 24. If “yes”, they are asked at what age they intend to get their license.
2. Reasons for delaying licensure to age 18+
3. Potential future programs/policy changes related to driver training and GDL

WASHINGTON GDL SURVEY – RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Age		
16 – 17	248	23.6%
18 – 24	802	76.4%
Gender		
A1: Male	503	47.9%
A2: Female	519	49.4%
A3: Non-binary	23	2.2%
A4: Other	5	0.5%
Household Size		
A1: It's just me	158	15.0%
A2: 2	152	14.5%
A3: 3 – 4	439	41.8%
A4: 5 or more	301	28.7%

WASHINGTON GDL SURVEY – RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Ethnic Identity		
A1: American Indian or Alaska Native	23	2.2%
A2: African-American or Black	95	9.0%
A3: Hispanic, Latino, Latina, or Latinx	131	12.5%
A4: Asian	99	9.4%
A5: Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	18	1.7%
A6: White	558	53.1%
A7: Two or more ethnicities	93	8.9%
A8: Other	33	3.1%
Geography		
A1: Urban	851	81.0%
A2: Suburban	92	8.8%
A3: Rural	106	10.1%

WASHINGTON GDL SURVEY – LICENSURE STATUS

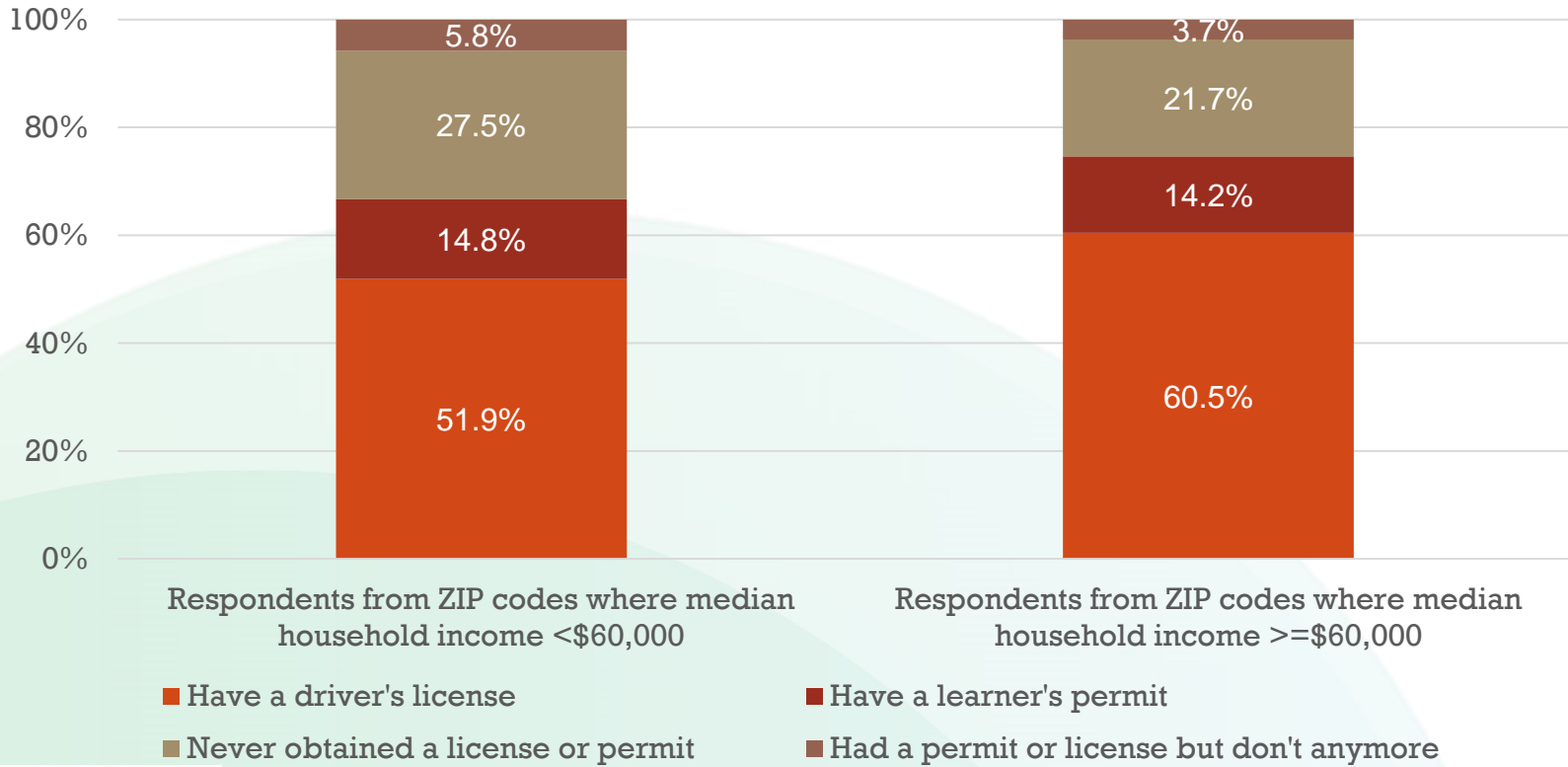
What best describes your driver's license status?		
A1: I have a driver's license	603	57.4%
A2: I have a learner's permit	152	14.5%
A3: I have never obtained a driver's license or a learner's permit	249	23.7%
A4: I had a permit or driver's license but don't anymore	46	4.4%

Age when first licensed (for respondents already licensed)		
16 - 17	452	72.8%
18 - 24	169	27.2%
	621	100.0%

Age when they plan to get a license (for respondents not yet licensed)		
16 - 17	110	28.7%
18 - 24	273	71.3%
	383	100.0%

WASHINGTON GDL SURVEY – LICENSURE STATUS

Licensure status by median household income of respondent's ZIP code



WASHINGTON GDL SURVEY – REASONS FOR DELAY

Breakdown of reasons people delay getting their license until age 18+
(N = 403, % that indicated a reason was moderately, very, or extremely important)

Expenses associated with being a licensed driver	214	53.1%
Required driver's education classes	210	52.1%
Don't have access to a vehicle	199	49.4%
Not a priority	170	42.2%
No one available to practice driving with	169	41.9%
Restrictions placed on 16-17 year olds	131	32.5%
Failed the test	122	30.3%
Parents/guardians won't allow	119	29.5%

*More significant than all other reasons at the 90% confidence level

WASHINGTON GDL SURVEY – REASONS FOR DELAY

Breakdown of the types of expenses that contribute to expenses as at least a moderately important reason for delay (N = 214, % that indicated a reason was moderately, very, or extremely important)

Cost to purchase a vehicle and/or monthly car payments	171	79.9%
Insurance	168	78.5%
Gas	147	68.7%
Car repairs	135	63.1%
Cost of license, registration, fees, and/or taxes	135	63.1%
Car maintenance, like oil changes	126	58.9%

*More significant than all other reasons at the 90% confidence level

WASHINGTON GDL SURVEY – REASONS FOR DELAY

Breakdown of the reasons that contribute to driver education classes as at least a moderately important a reason for delay
(N = 210, % that indicated a reason was moderately, very, or extremely important)

They were too expensive	119	56.7%
My schedule was too busy to attend a class	84	40.0%
They happened at times I was unavailable to attend	83	39.5%
I was afraid I'd fail	82	39.0%
The locations were too far away	78	37.1%
I didn't have a way to get to them	75	35.7%
I didn't like going to class	68	32.4%

*More significant than all other reasons at the 90% confidence level

WASHINGTON GDL SURVEY – REASONS FOR DELAY

Breakdown of the reasons that contribute to not a priority as at least a moderately important a reason for delay (N = 170, % that indicated a reason was moderately, very, or extremely important)

There was usually someone who could drive me where I wanted to go	116	68.2%
I didn't want to risk getting into a crash	98	57.6%
I could get where I wanted to go by other means, like public transportation, walking or biking	93	54.7%
I was too nervous about driving	89	52.4%
I could stay connected with friends in other ways, such as social media	88	51.8%
It was too much of a time commitment	66	38.8%

*More significant than all other reasons at the 90% confidence level

WASHINGTON GDL SURVEY – REASONS FOR DELAY

Breakdown of the types of restrictions that contribute to Restrictions as at least a moderately important a reason for delay (N = 131, % that indicated a reason was moderately, very, or extremely important)

The nighttime driving restrictions that keep you from driving between 1 am and 5 am for the first 12 months unless you are with a driver at least 25 years of age seated next to you.	86	65.6%
You cannot use a cell phone or any other communication device while driving, including hands free devices unless you are calling an emergency service.	82	62.6%
You cannot have a non-family member passenger under 20 years old during the first 6 months of driving; and then no more than 3 non-family member passengers under 20 years old for the next six months.	76	58.0%

WASHINGTON GDL SURVEY – INTEREST IN POTENTIAL PROGRAMS

Percent of respondents that are at least moderately interested in the potential programs related to driver training
(N = 210, % that indicated they are moderately, very, or extremely interested in the proposed program)

Financial assistance (for those who qualify) for the cost of taking driver's education classes	152	72.4%
Online driver's education classes that you can take instead of in-person classes	140	66.7%

Percent of respondents that are at least somewhat likely to take advantage of a driving mentorship program
(N = 169, % that indicated they were somewhat, very, or definitely likely to take advantage of the program)

Program where mentors are available to do the driving practice hours with you	110	65.1%
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WASHINGTON GDL SURVEY – RESPONSE TO POTENTIAL NEW RESTRICTIONS

Breakdown of the Potential New Restrictions that might deter people from getting their license until age 18+ if they were implemented (N = 348, % that indicated the proposed restriction was somewhat, very, or definitely likely to deter them from getting a license)

Current restrictions would apply to all new drivers, not just 16 – 17 years-old drivers	200	57.5%
Increase the number of supervised driving practice hours from 50 to 80	191	54.9%
Require a log book of practice hours that is signed by a parent / guardian to be submitted when applying for a driver's license	184	52.9%
Restricting new drivers to have no non-family member teen passengers for the first six months; and then no more than 1 non-family teen passenger for the next 6 months	175	50.3%

*More significant than all other reasons at the 90% confidence level

WASHINGTON GDL SURVEY – RESPONSE TO POTENTIAL NEW RESTRICTIONS

Breakdown of the Potential New Restrictions that might deter people from getting their license until age 18+ if they were implemented (N = 437, % that indicated the proposed restriction was somewhat, very, or definitely likely to deter them from getting a license) - CONTINUED

Increase the learner's permit holding period from 6 months to 1 year	167	48.0%
Expand the nighttime driving restrictions to start at 10 pm instead of 1 am (until 5 am in both cases)	165	47.4%

Breakdown of the Potential New Restrictions that might deter people from getting their license until age 18+ if they were implemented (N = 44, % that indicated the proposed restriction was somewhat, very, or definitely likely to deter them from getting a license)

Increase minimum age for permit from 15 to 16	33	75.0%
Increase minimum age for a license from 16 to 17	26	59.1%

CONCLUSIONS & KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The reasons for delay found in the Washington GDL survey are consistent with findings from the prior AAA surveys
 - Respondents that identify as a person of color and respondents from lower income areas more likely to delay licensure
 - Most young people delay licensure for reasons related to expense and opportunity
- New GDL restrictions need to be coupled with programs and resources to mitigate further delay of licensure
 - Delay of licensure most common among vulnerable population groups (low income, people of color)
 - The safety impacts of missing the GDL window also fall most heavily on vulnerable population groups
 - Strengthening Washington's GDL restrictions to align with best practices could have negative consequences if it causes young people to delay licensure even more
 - Programs such as financial assistance for driver's education, online driver training, and a driving mentorship program could help mitigate those negative consequences.

Questions



Thank You

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

ALISON RADFORD – ARADFORD@DOL.WA.GOV

HAIPING ZHANG – HZHANG@DOL.WA.GOV

LINK TO SURVEY REPORT:

**[HTTP://WTSC.WA.GOV/WP-
CONTENT/UPLOADS/DLM_UPLOADS/2020/09/GDL-
PROGRAM-ATTITUDE-AND-BEHAVIOR-SURVEY-
RESULTS_JUL2020.PDF](http://wtsc.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/dlm_uploads/2020/09/gdl-program-attitude-and-behavior-survey-results_jul2020.pdf)**