

1 SENATE BILL NO. 300

2 INTRODUCED BY C. GLIMM

3

4 A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT GENERALLY REVISING TRAFFIC EDUCATION LAWS;
 5 REVISING THE TRAFFIC EDUCATION DUTIES OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION;
 6 AUTHORIZING THE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION TO APPROVE ~~PRIVATE~~
 7 ALTERNATIVE TRAFFIC EDUCATION COURSES THAT MEET CRITERIA; AUTHORIZING A SCHOOL
 8 DISTRICT TO PROVIDE THE TRAFFIC EDUCATION CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION IN A DISTANCE
 9 LEARNING FORMAT; ~~ALLOWING A PARENT OR GUARDIAN OF A STUDENT WHO COMPLETES THE~~
 10 ~~TRAFFIC EDUCATION CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION TO INSTRUCT THE STUDENT IN THE HANDS-ON~~
 11 ~~DRIVING PORTION OF THE TRAFFIC EDUCATION COURSE~~; ALLOWING A TEMPORARY OPPORTUNITY
 12 FOR A STUDENT TO OBTAIN A LEARNER LICENSE AFTER TAKING AN ONLINE TRAFFIC EDUCATION
 13 COURSE DUE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC; REQUIRING ADDITIONAL SUPERVISED DRIVING TIME IF
 14 TAKING AN ALTERNATIVE TRAFFIC EDUCATION COURSE; AMENDING SECTIONS 20-7-502, ~~AND~~ 20-7-
 15 503, ~~AND~~ 61-5-106, ~~AND~~ 61-5-132, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN IMMEDIATE EFFECTIVE DATE AND A
 16 TERMINATION DATE."

17

18 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

19

20 **Section 1.** Section 20-7-502, MCA, is amended to read:

21 **"20-7-502. Duties of superintendent of public instruction.** The superintendent of public instruction
 22 shall:

- 23 (1) develop, administer, and supervise a program of instruction in traffic education;
 24 (2) establish basic course requirements in instruction for traffic education;
 25 (3) establish the qualifications for a teacher of traffic education;
 26 (4) approve teachers of traffic education when the teachers are qualified;
 27 (5) establish criteria for traffic education course approval based on the basic course requirements,
 28 teacher of traffic education qualifications, and the requirements of law;

1 (6) approve traffic education courses when the courses meet the criteria for approval, including a
 2 ~~commercially available private traffic education course~~ FLEXIBILITY IN APPROVING ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS THAT
 3 MEET THE CRITERIA FOR APPROVAL;

4 (7) promulgate a policy for the distribution of the traffic education money to approved traffic education
 5 courses and annually order the distribution of the proceeds of the traffic education account in the manner
 6 required by law;

7 (8) assist districts with the conduct of traffic education; ~~and~~

8 (9) periodically conduct onsite driver education program reviews; AND

9 (10) establish any alternative course requirements necessary to allow a district to provide an online or
 10 distance learning classroom component for a traffic education course pursuant to 20-7-503(2)(a); and

11 ~~(11) establish any alternative course requirements necessary to allow the student's parents or~~
 12 ~~guardian to instruct the student in the hands-on driving component of a traffic education course pursuant to 20-~~
 13 ~~7-503(2)(b)."~~

14

15 **Section 2.** Section 20-7-503, MCA, is amended to read:

16 **"20-7-503. District establishment of traffic education program.** (1) The trustees of any district
 17 operating a junior high school or high school may establish and maintain a traffic education course. The traffic
 18 education course shall be:

19 ~~(1)(a)~~ (a) for students who are 15 years old or older or will have reached their 15th birthday within 6
 20 months of the course completion;

21 ~~(2)(b)~~ (b) taught by a teacher of traffic education;

22 ~~(3)(c)~~ (c) conducted in accordance with the basic course requirements established by the superintendent
 23 of public instruction; and

24 ~~(4)(d)~~ (d) taught during regular school hours, after regular school hours, on Saturdays, or as a summer
 25 school course, at the option of the trustees.

26 (2) (a) A school district may offer the classroom portion of a traffic education course through an
 27 online or distance learning platform.

28 ~~(b) When a student completes the classroom portion of a traffic education course pursuant to~~

1 ~~subsection (2)(a), the student is authorized to take the hands-on driving portion of the traffic education course~~
 2 ~~under the instruction of the student's parent or guardian.~~ A SCHOOL DISTRICT MAY OFFER AN ALTERNATIVE PROGRAM
 3 TRACK CONSISTING OF AN APPROVED TRAFFIC EDUCATION COURSE WITH A MINIMUM OF 60 HOURS OF INSTRUCTION,
 4 INCLUDING A MINIMUM OF 3 HOURS OF BEHIND-THE-WHEEL INSTRUCTION. AN ALTERNATIVE PROGRAM UNDER THIS
 5 SUBSECTION (2)(B) MUST REQUIRE A MINIMUM OF 75 HOURS OF SUPERVISED DRIVING, INCLUDING 15 HOURS OF
 6 SUPERVISED DRIVING AT NIGHT."

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8 **SECTION 3. SECTION 61-5-106, MCA, IS AMENDED TO READ:**

9 **"61-5-106. Instruction permits -- temporary driver's permits.** (1) (a) The department may issue a
 10 learner license, which is valid for 1 year from the date of issuance, to a person satisfying the age requirements
 11 specified in 61-5-105(1) after the applicant has successfully passed the knowledge test and the vision
 12 examination, as provided in 61-5-110. Except as provided in subsections (1)(b) and (1)(c), a learner license
 13 entitles the licensee, while in immediate possession of the license and accompanied by a licensed driver seated
 14 beside the licensee, to drive a motor vehicle other than a motorcycle upon the public highways.

15 (b) If the licensee is under 18 years of age, the driver supervising the licensee must be a parent or a
 16 legal guardian of the licensee or, with the permission of the licensee's parent or legal guardian, a licensed driver
 17 18 years of age or older. Each occupant of a motor vehicle driven by a licensee who is under 18 years of age
 18 shall wear a properly adjusted and fastened seatbelt or, if 61-9-420 applies, must be properly restrained in a
 19 child safety restraint.

20 (c) A person holding a learner license for a motorcycle may drive a motorcycle upon a public highway
 21 if the person is not carrying a passenger, has immediate possession of the license, and is under the immediate
 22 and proximate visual supervision of one of the following persons, who must be at least 18 years of age if the
 23 licensee is under 18 years of age:

24 (i) a motorcycle-endorsed licensed driver who is riding with the licensee and who is operating a
 25 separate motorcycle or other motor vehicle; or

26 (ii) a licensed driver who is operating a separate motor vehicle if the licensee has successfully
 27 completed a motorcycle safety training course through a cooperative driver testing program certified under 61-
 28 5-110.

1 (2) (a) The department may issue a learner license, which is valid for 1 year from the date of
2 issuance, to any person who is at least 14 1/2 years of age and who has successfully completed or is
3 successfully participating in a traffic education course approved by the department and the superintendent of
4 public instruction and that is available to all who meet the age requirements specified in 20-7-503 and reside
5 within the geographical boundaries of or attend a school in the school district that offers the course. A learner
6 license entitles the licensee to operate a motor vehicle when accompanied by an approved instructor, a
7 licensed parent or guardian, or other driver as provided in subsection (1)(b) and may be restricted to specific
8 times or areas.

9 (b) A person who meets the age requirements established in subsection (2)(a) and was unable to
10 participate in a traffic education course as a result of the covid-19 pandemic must be allowed to test for and
11 receive a learner license upon showing proof of completion of an online traffic education course.

12 (3) (a) An instructor of a traffic education program approved by the department and by the
13 superintendent of public instruction may issue a traffic education permit that is effective for a school year or
14 more restricted period to an applicant who is enrolled in a traffic education program approved by the
15 department and who meets the age requirements specified in 20-7-503.

16 (b) When in immediate possession of the traffic education permit, the permittee may operate on a
17 designated highway or within a designated area:

18 (i) a motor vehicle when an approved instructor is seated beside the permittee; or

19 (ii) a motorcycle or quadricycle when under the immediate and proximate supervision of an approved
20 instructor.

21 (4) The department may in its discretion issue a temporary driver's permit to an applicant for a driver's
22 license permitting the applicant to operate a motor vehicle while the department is completing its investigation
23 and determination of all facts relative to the applicant's right to receive a driver's license. The temporary driver's
24 permit must be in the permittee's immediate possession while operating a motor vehicle, and it is invalid when
25 the applicant's license has been issued or for good cause has been refused.

26 (5) The department may in its discretion issue a temporary commercial driver's license to an applicant
27 permitting the applicant to operate a commercial motor vehicle while the department is completing its
28 investigation and determination of all facts relative to the applicant's right to receive a commercial driver's

1 license. The temporary license must be in the applicant's immediate possession while operating a commercial
2 motor vehicle and is invalid when the applicant's license has been issued or for good cause has been refused.

3 (6) The department may in its discretion issue a temporary medical assessment and rehabilitation
4 driving permit, as provided in 61-5-120."
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6 **SECTION 4. SECTION 61-5-132, MCA, IS AMENDED TO READ:**

7 **"61-5-132. Prerequisites for issuance of driver's license to minor.** (1) The department may issue
8 a driver's license, subject to the restrictions of 61-5-133, to a person under 18 years of age if the person:

9 (a) has held a learner license or traffic education permit for a period of not less than 6 months;

10 (b) has passed a road test or a skills test, as provided in 61-5-110;

11 (c) (i) has successfully completed a traditional traffic education course approved pursuant to 20-7-

12 503(1) and presents written certification from the person's parent or legal guardian that states that the person

13 has had at least 50 hours of driving experience, 10 of which were at night, during which the person was

14 supervised by a parent, a legal guardian, or a person at least 18 years of age, with the consent of the parent or
15 legal guardian, who had a valid driver's license; or

16 (ii) has successfully completed an alternative traffic education course approved pursuant to 20-7-

17 503(2)(b) and presents written certification from the person's parent or legal guardian that states the person has

18 had at least 75 hours of driving experience, 15 of which were at night, during which the person was supervised

19 by a parent, legal guardian, or a person at least 18 years of age, with the consent of the parent or legal

20 guardian, who had a valid driver's license; and

21 (d) presents written certification from the person's parent or legal guardian that states that, during the
22 6-month period immediately preceding application for a driver's license, the person has not been convicted of a
23 traffic violation or convicted of or adjudicated for an offense involving the use of alcohol or drugs and the person
24 has no pending traffic, alcohol, or drug citations.

25 (2) If a parent or a legal guardian for a person under 18 years of age cannot certify that the person
26 has a 6-month conviction-free record for traffic, alcohol, and drug violations and no pending traffic, alcohol, or
27 drug citations, the department may extend the person's learner license for an additional 1-year period or until
28 the person's 18th birthday, whichever occurs first.

1 (3) (a) The requirements of subsections (1)(a) through (1)(c) do not apply to a person under 18 years
2 of age who has been licensed in another state for at least 6 months and surrenders a valid driver's license from
3 that state.

4 (b) The requirements of subsection (1)(c) do not apply to a person under 18 years of age who, at the
5 time of application for a driver's license, is an enrollee of a job corps program located in Montana. The
6 department may require the applicant to provide current documentation of the applicant's job corps program
7 enrollment status."

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9 ~~NEW SECTION. **Section 4. Effective date.** [This act] is effective July 1, 2021.~~

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11 ~~NEW SECTION. **Section 5. EFFECTIVE DATE.** [THIS ACT] IS EFFECTIVE ON PASSAGE AND APPROVAL.~~

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13 ~~NEW SECTION. **Section 6. TERMINATION.** [SECTION 3] TERMINATES JUNE 30, 2024 2023.~~

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- END -