



**Joint Standing Committee on Transportation
LD 446: An Act Regarding Driver Education**

Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation. My name is Tom Baran, and I am a Traffic Safety Education Specialist for AAA Northern New England. AAA Northern New England is an auto club and membership organization of over 1 million members in Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont. AAA actively advocates for public policy that make Maine a safer place to live, work, and raise our families. Today, I come before you in support of LD446.

As teens begin their journey toward independence, one of the most critical skills they must develop is safe driving. A solid foundation of knowledge, skills, and planning is essential to help reduce their risk behind the wheel. Quality driver education plays a vital role in building safe driving attitudes, improving hazard recognition, and helping new drivers manage visibility, time, and space in traffic.

AAA is deeply committed to supporting young drivers and their families through this process. We work hard to prepare teens for the responsibilities of the road and are proud to be a trusted resource in this space.

AAA Northern New England applauds the recently released February 2025 Driver Education Working Group Report. This great report outlines meaningful, practical solutions to improve teen access to professional driver education and strengthen Maine's driver safety infrastructure.

Traffic crashes remain one of the leading causes of death for U.S. teens ages 16–19. Tragically, six teens are killed every day in crashes—many of which are entirely preventable. Per mile driven, teen drivers are nearly three times more likely than drivers aged 20 and older to be involved in a fatal crash. Even the most responsible teens face elevated risks due to their lack of experience, skills, and maturity. This risk doesn't affect just the teen driver—it impacts passengers and everyone sharing the road.

That's why we must ensure every Maine teen has access to comprehensive, up-to-date, and professionally delivered driver education. LD 446 helps move us closer to that goal, and for that reason, AAA Northern New England strongly supports this bill.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak to you today. I would be happy to answer any questions.