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Testimony of Rep. Anne-Marie Mastraccio presenting

LD 1480, An Act Regarding Exceptions for Persons Learning to Drive Who Have Not Yet Completed a Driver Education Course

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation

Good afternoon, Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts and esteemed colleagues on the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation, I am Anne-Marie Mastraccio, and I represent House District 142, which includes part of the City of Sanford and the Village of Springvale. I am before you today to present **LD 1480, An Act Regarding Exceptions for Persons Learning to Drive Who Have Not Yet Completed a Driver Education Course**.

The legislation before you today would create an exception to the law that an applicant for a learner's permit must complete a course in driver education prior to being issued a learner's permit. It would allow a person who is older than 15 ½ but not yet 18 years of age to apply for a learner's permit, even if they have not yet taken a driver education course. At this point, the young person would be able to begin to learn to drive under the tutelage of their parent, guardian or another designated adult. They would still need to take a driver education course prior to taking their driving test in order to receive their license. The bill would also allow an individual the opportunity to take a driver education course that includes only classroom instruction through an adult education program. Adult education would be empowered to proctor the exam and issue a learner's permit upon successful completion of the course.

I believe driver education plays an important role in assuring young drivers will be well educated about all aspects of safe driving and accident prevention. When driver education was taught in public school and paid for by the taxpayers, all students had the same opportunity to take the course. Cost was not an issue. At some point driver education was privatized and has since become expensive and not easily accessible for drivers in Maine. The report issued in February by the Driver Education Working Group recognizes the importance of driver education and the increasing barriers to accessing that education.

I am encouraged that the Transportation Committee will be discussing the report's recommendations and proposing legislation that will address those recommendations. It is my hope that you will add the suggestions in LD 1480 to your discussion.

Thank you for your consideration. I am happy to answer any questions.