

Bipartisan bill that would help save lives and taxpayer dollars ramps up sponsors in Congress

NORTHBROOK, Ill., March 13, 2012 /PRNewswire via COMTEX/ -- Allstate joined U.S. Rep. Allen West (R-FL) in Jupiter, Fla. today as he announced his co-sponsorship of the Safe Teen and Novice Uniform Protection (STANDUP) Act - H.R. 1515.

"We are proud to stand with Congressman West on this important piece of legislation that will help save lives and helps create a culture of safe driving for current and future generations," said Bill Vainisi, senior vice president and deputy general counsel, Allstate Insurance Company. "This is truly a bipartisan issue that affects American families across the country, and we urge leaders in Congress to join us in the fight to enact federal uniform graduated driver licensing (GDL) standards that empower states to establish stronger teen driving laws. This can be done either by passing STANDUP as a stand-alone bill or by supporting its inclusion in pending transportation reauthorization bills before Congress."

The STANDUP Act creates minimum GDL standards for all young drivers to protect them on America's highways and roads. GDL programs allow new young drivers to gain experience under supervised and less risky conditions, addressing several major facets of the teen driving problem.

Underscoring the benefit this legislation has for communities and families is a recent study conducted by the National Safety Council on the financial and human impact of such laws. That report indicates that if all states implemented comprehensive GDL laws, an estimated 2,000 lives could be saved. Further, if all 50 states were to enact these laws, it could generate savings of \$13.6 billion per year. In Florida alone, 181 lives and more than \$1.2 billion could be saved.

Congressman West announced his support of the STANDUP Act today at a teen driving event at Jupiter High School. Joined by teens, law enforcement and victim family advocates, West expressed his concern to strengthen teen driving laws in Florida and across the country.

"As the father of two teenage daughters, I am personally concerned with the dangers of young

people on the road," West said. "The STANDUP Act will do exactly that- 'Stand Up' for our children, by taking a bold approach to tightening up the laws on teens and driving. I thank Allstate for being a leader in the insurance industry and joining me in support of this legislation. I encourage my colleagues across both sides of the Congressional aisle to support the STANDUP Act."

More than 50 Members of Congress from both political parties have signed on as co-sponsors of the STANDUP Act, further emphasizing the need to pass this bipartisan legislation. Elements of the bill have been included in the major federal highway funding legislation currently before Congress, and Allstate continues to work toward advancing the strongest national minimum GDL standards possible.

"Most states have some form of GDL laws, but individual standards vary from state to state. This patchwork system of varying state teen driving laws fails to fully include all of the proven elements of reliable behind-the-wheel training for young drivers," said Vainisi. "Car crashes are the leading cause of death among American teens, and we have a real opportunity to stop this epidemic in its tracks with a national GDL law."

GDL laws allow novice and/or teen drivers to get on-the-road driving experience gradually, and under lower-risk conditions. GDL laws vary by state but the STANDUP Act has the following optimal provisions:

Three-phase licensing process before full licensure that includes a learner's permit issued no earlier than age 16, an intermediate stage, and full licensure at age 18;

Ban on cell phone use and other mobile devices, including texting while driving;

Nighttime driving restrictions; and,

Restrictions on driving with teen passengers.

Through Allstate's Save 11 Campaign, more than 177,000 Americans have already added their voice to a growing chorus of citizens urging Congress to pass this bill and that number continues to grow. Visit facebook.com/save11 to learn how to contact your local lawmakers and support the STANDUP Act.

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