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JOINT LEGISLATIVE PUBLIC HEARINGS
ON THE FY 2025 EXECUTIVE BUDGET PROPOSAL

Written Testimony for
The New York State Senate Finance Committee
and
The New York State Assembly Ways and Means Committee
on the Transportation Budget

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Albany, NY



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Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony of the New York State Association of Professional Driving Schools with respect to Governor Hochul's FY 2025 Executive Budget proposal concerning matters on Transportation. The New York State Association of Professional Driving Schools (NYSAPDS) was formed to promote the efforts of professional driving instruction throughout New York State. These efforts specifically target the safety and wellbeing of all New York State Drivers.

Extend the Internet Point Insurance Reduction Program for two years

With respect to the FY 25 Executive Budget proposal, the item of interest that impacts NYSAPDS is **S.8308/A.8808 - Transportation, Economic Development and Environmental Conservation Budget Bill - Part F – which extend the Internet Point Insurance Reduction Program for two years.** While NYSAPDS supports a clean extension of this provision included in the Governor's Budget proposal with no changes, we do want to use this opportunity to bring to the Governor and Legislature's attention some concerns pertaining to the proliferation of internet-based safety courses allowed to be taken online without a live instructor teaching the course. This is especially the case with the recently enacted Online Pre-Licensing Course Providers, commonly referred to as the "5 Hour" course that pre-licensees must complete as a condition for getting a driver's license in New York. While there are prohibitions placed on 16 and 17 years olds taking this course, there have been efforts from large internet only providers to try and remove this prohibition.

The NYSAPDS strongly opposes any efforts such to remove this prohibition and instead believes the age prohibition should be increased to help ensure safe driving across New York State. NYSAPDS is dedicated to the safety and education of New York drivers, particularly new and younger drivers. NYS has always recognized the particular dangers involved with teenage drivers and their driving an automobile. With traditional restrictions on class DJ licenses and graduated licensing, NYS has always advocated a strong educational element for these drivers who are especially at risk.

Highway deaths due to automobile collisions are on the rise in New York State and across the country. Pedestrian deaths due to reckless & careless driving are also on the rise. Now is not the time to short-change younger drivers with respect to their driving education. With the pre-licensing course, we need the strong education element that live instruction provides, (whether in-person or via distance learning), as opposed to "click-through" online courses, particularly for these younger drivers.

Require 6 Hours of Pre-licensure Driving Instruction

Another proposal the Legislature should enact is requiring NYS D or DJ license applicants to complete 6 hours of on-the-road training with a licensed professional driving school before taking the NYS road test such as S.2575 (Gounardes)/A.1505(Carroll). Currently, prospective licensees are required to certify that they had 50 hours of driving time behind the wheel before taking a road test. However, this does include having time requirements with a licensed driving instructor like in most other states. The



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NYSAPDS believes legislation requiring NYS Class D or DJ to have specialized on-the-road training with a licensed professional driving school before taking a road test will provide the State roadway with better driver safety leading to a reduction in driving accidents.

Allowing Driving Schools to Provide Driver's Education Independently

Finally, one last area the Legislature should focus on with respect to driver's safety is expanding access to driver's education. Currently, S.7234 (Kennedy) is a piece of legislation that would allow all licensed professional driving schools that are certified and contracted to conduct the in-car portion of driver education programs independently, and the driver education program in its entirety. Currently, New York State driver's education courses are provided by local high schools that contract with instructors to provide classroom lectures and in-car driving instruction. The NYSAPDS believes allowing licensed driving schools to offer driver education programs, independent from the school district system, would provide the licensed driving schools with another product they may offer and provide flexibility to those students whose high school does not offer a driver's education program.

Conclusion

We thank the Legislature for this opportunity to voice both the support and concerns of the New York State Association of Professional Driving School membership. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to our government affairs representative Kevin Bronner Jr, Managing Director-Park Strategies at kbronner@parkstrategies.com or 518.426.3800.