

THE FLORIDA SENATE
2011 SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION PASSED

Committee on Transportation

CS/CS/HB 689 — Driver Education and Testing

by Economic Affairs Committee; Transportation and Highway Safety Subcommittee; and Rep. Berman and others (CS/SB 1974 by Budget Committee and Senator Hill)

This bill amends ss. 318.1451 and 322.095, F.S., relating to Driver Improvement Schools and Traffic Law and Substance Abuse Education Programs for driver's license applicants. The bill amends these sections to include course content regarding the risks associated with the use of handheld electronic communication devices while operating a motor vehicle. The Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (Department) is required to consider whether such information is included in a provider's curriculum, when determining whether to approve the courses.

The bill amends s. 322.12, F.S., to require driver's license exams and commercial driver's license exams to include one question testing the applicant's knowledge of traffic regulations to assist blind persons. The questions developed by the Department must emphasize pedestrian right-of-way when a driver is making a right turn at an intersection.

The bill amends s. 322.56, F.S., to provide that learner's driver's license applicants must have the opportunity to take written examinations with third-party providers; however, the Department is not precluded from continuing to provide written examinations. The bill requires the Department to contract with providers of approved traffic law and substance abuse education courses to serve as third-party administrators to conduct online knowledge tests for learner's driver's license applicants. The on-line testing program must require, prior to administering the examination, the applicant's parent, guardian or other responsible adult to provide the third-party administrator his or her driver's license number. In addition, before the issuance of the learner's driver's license, the parent, guardian, or other responsible adult must provide to the Department a signed and dated affidavit acknowledging he or she was aware of and allowed the applicant to take the examination online.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2011.

Vote: Senate 28-9; House 94-16