

Changes On The Way For Elderly Drivers?

KXAN-TV

How old is too old to drive? The Insurance Institute reports that older drivers generally are as safe as other age groups until they reach the age of 75.

And drivers 85 and older are about as likely to be involved in a fatal crash as those ages 16 to 19.

This Session '07, changes could be on the way for older drivers in Texas.

A new bill proposing driving tests for seniors, which would be called Katie's Law, has been filed at the Texas Capitol.

KXAN's political reporter Jenny Hoff talks about who this law would impact and why families are pushing for its passage.

On May 30 of last year, 17-year-old Katie Bolka was on her way to school, Ursuline Academy in Dallas, when a 90-year-old woman went through a stoplight and crashed into Katie's car.

The light had been red for almost half a minute when the woman sped through it.

"Even to the point where you see your little girl's Ursuline uniform in the corner of the room covered in blood, and you buckle to your knees. It's still not your child, and it's still not happening," Johna Bolka, Katie's mother, said.

But it did happen. Katie died, leaving her little sister and parents behind. They're now pushing for Katie's law. It would require 90-year-olds to retake their driver's test.

"If someone's older and they're still very safe, then they ought to be able to prove that in a test, [that] they're safe to themselves and society," Rep. Dan Branch, R-Dallas, said.

However, a 90-year-old check still would not have saved Joan and Kent Bohls' daughter, Michelle. The Fayette County ambulance driver was killed by an 86-year-old woman driving on the wrong side on the highway.

"No wedding, no grandchildren. All those things you dream about as a mother, you don't get to have them," Jane said.

Six states currently require a vision test for older drivers every few years. Only two states also require a road test, both at 75 years old. As of now, Texas requires nothing.

Part of that is due to the AARP's past opposition to regulating elderly drivers. However, Katie's family says it's time to change that.

Share your opinion on Katie's Law in the feedback forum below.

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