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'Katie's Law' has senior Texans facing new driving hurdles

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By: Associated Press



Among the hundreds of new Texas laws taking effect Sept. 1 is one called [Katie's Law](#).

Katie Bolka was just a final exam away from the start of her 2006 summer vacation when she stopped at a red light on her way to school. The 17-year-old Dallas junior and budding artist continued through the intersection when it turned green.

Her car was the third through the light when another piloted by a 90-year-old driver slammed into Bolka's door at about 45 mph.

Badly injured, Bolka died a few days later.

Bolka's parents were convinced that the woman who struck their daughter should not have been behind the wheel.

The couple pushed Texas lawmakers to pass "Katie's Law," which places new restrictions on elderly drivers in Texas.

Drivers 79 and older will no longer be allowed to renew their licenses by mail or Internet. They also must submit to a mandatory vision test. And drivers 85 and older will need to renew every two years, rather than six.

Texas has more than 480,000 drivers age 79 and older, some of whom will likely complain about the change.

Warning signs for older drivers having trouble behind the wheel



Here's a list of [AARP warning signs](#) that may indicate you or your loved one should no longer be driving

- Feeling uncomfortable and nervous or fearful while driving.
- Dents and scrapes on the car or on fences, mailboxes, garage doors, curbs, etc.
- Difficulty staying in the lane of travel.
- Getting lost.
- Trouble paying attention to signals, road signs, and pavement markings.
- Slower response to unexpected situations.
- Medical conditions or medications that may be affecting the ability to handle the car safely.
- Frequent "close calls," such almost crashing.
- Trouble judging gaps in traffics at intersections and on highway entrance/exit ramps.
- Other drivers honking at you and instances when you are angry at other drivers.
- Friends or relatives not wanting to drive with you.
- Difficulty seeing the sides of the road when looking straight ahead.
- Easily distracted or having a hard time concentrating.
- Difficulty turning to check over your shoulder while backing up or changing lanes.
- More frequent traffic tickets or warnings.

If you notice one or more of these warning signs you may want to

have your driving assessed by a professional or attend a driver refresher class or consult a physician.

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