



EXPECT
something
MORE™

COLORADO DRIVER EDUCATION MODERNIZATION

Seven Years, Three Bills, One Chart

GHSA ANNUAL MEETING

Presented by **Skyler McKinley**, AAA

HB24-1021



THE PROBLEM WE SET OUT TO FIX

Colorado's system rewarded you for waiting

The longer you waited to get a permit, the less we asked of you – and we asked the least of the drivers at highest risk.

START BEFORE 15½

30-hour course
+ behind-the-wheel

WAIT TO 15½

4-hour
awareness class

WAIT TO 16

No classroom
education at all

WAIT TO 18

No classroom
education at all

~4×

the overall crash rate per mile driven for **16-19-year-olds** versus drivers 20 and up. (IIHS)

Access isn't the problem. Since the last time anybody looked at this statute, availability has broadened considerably – in-person and online providers now reach new drivers in just about every part of Colorado. **What we were missing was the requirement.**



THE EVIDENCE THAT MOVED IT

Driver's education works.

In their first year on the road, young drivers who **skipped** a state-approved course – versus those who completed one – were:

75%

more likely to get a **traffic ticket**

24%

more likely to be in an **injury or fatal crash**

16%

more likely to crash **at all**

Shell, Newman, Córdova-Cazar & Heese (2015), *Accident Analysis & Prevention* 82:45–52 – a census of 151,870 Nebraska teens (2003–2010), controlling for income, geography, gender and ethnicity.

Four years, no bill

Years of meetings and a policy paper, and then we tabled it ourselves.

APRIL 2017

First internal AAA conversation about reforming Colorado's driver's education statutes.

OCTOBER 2017

Long sessions with driver's education experts on best practices and Colorado's gaps.

MAY & OCT 2018

AAA National on alignment; Colorado Teen Driving Alliance on appetite for reform.

FEB-SUMMER 2019

Department of Revenue and State Patrol leadership help identify specific reforms. First policy paper written, distributed; sponsor search begins.

SEPTEMBER 2019

Presented specific requests to the Transportation Legislation Review Committee. **No bill was drafted or approved.**

FEB-MARCH 2020

AAA tables its own proposal for lack of data, and asks scientific partners for more research.

Tabled twice, stalled once, vetoed once

Six years in, we had no law – and a veto that had nothing to do with us.

SEPTEMBER 2021

Proposal updated with new data from **Washington and Georgia**, redistributed to stakeholders.

OCTOBER 2021

Tabled again – this time for lack of lawmaker support.

AUG-SEPT 2022

TLRC approves the proposal as **formal legislation** and advances it. Introduced as **SB23-011**.

JANUARY 2023

SB23-011 stalls in committee over fiscal concerns.

MAY 2023

Reforms amended into **HB23-1147**, a separate driver's education bill. It passes both chambers.

MAY 2023

Vetoed. The governor's objections had nothing to do with our provisions.

A clean bill, and a champion

Rejected in draft, carried anyway, and then compromised twice on its way to the governor's desk.

AUGUST 2023

AAA asks TLRC to draft a **clean bill** answering both the fiscal note and the governor's objections.

OCTOBER 2023

TLRC rejects the draft on drafting limits – but **Rep. Mandy Lindsay commits to carry a new bill.**

JANUARY 2024

HB24-1021 introduced; clears House Transportation Committee.

MARCH 2024

Stalls before House passage over stakeholder concerns. AAA brokers a compromise; it passes the House March 22.

APRIL 2024

Passes the Senate with **significant compromise amendments**. The House concurs.

MAY 2024

Signed into law. Reforms take effect **January 1, 2027.**

THE CAUTIONARY TALE

Just ten short years. But who's counting?

APRIL 2017

“Here's a good idea to improve driver's education and safety outcomes.”

MAY 2024

The good idea is **finally** signed into law.

JANUARY 2027

The good idea **finally** changes what a new driver has to do.

These are complicated ideas with real fiscal impacts on working families. **You have to start early and stay at it to win the day.**



HB24-1021 signed into law – May 2024, seven years after the first conversation.

— HOW IT GOT UNSTUCK

Nobody could agree on what the law already said.

Colorado's driver's education requirements live in several different sections of statute, and the age thresholds don't line up. In March 2024, lawmakers, drafters and stakeholders couldn't agree on **what current law already required**.

THE FIX

A few hours in PowerPoint, and **one chart** laying out every starting age and every requirement, before and after.

THE RESULT

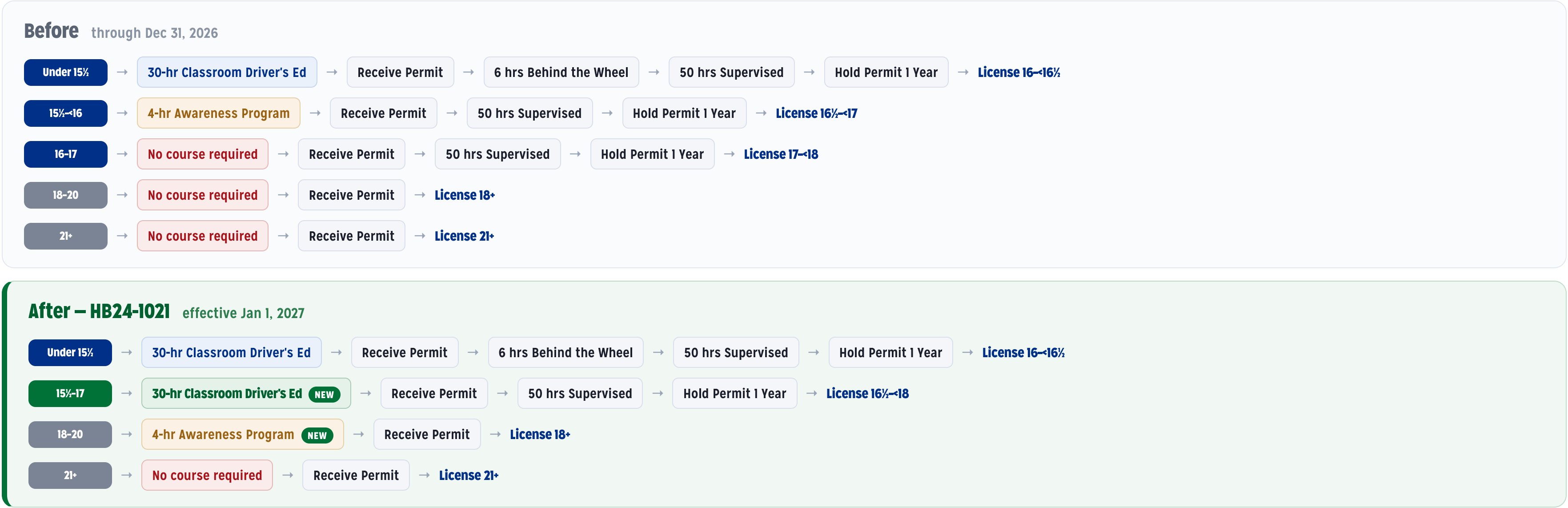
That chart brokered the compromise that **passed the House on March 22, 2024**.

Lawmakers are expected to study everything they vote on, but nobody can go into great depth on every bill. **The more you can give them in simple ways, the better.**

The path to a license, by starting age

Expanding classroom requirements

30-hr driver's ed 4-hr awareness no course new under HB24-1021



WHAT THE COMPROMISE COST

What we traded away to pass it

What we wanted, and what we gave up to get the rest.

GAVE UP

A behind-the-wheel requirement

The new 30-hour mandate is **classroom only**. Six behind-the-wheel hours are still required only if you license before 16%.

GAVE UP

More supervised practice

Colorado stayed at **50 hours**. The national best-practice bar is 70.

GAVE UP

Adult drivers

18-20 get a **four-hour class**, not a course. **21 and up still need nothing**.

CONCEDED

Three years of runway

Signed May 2024, effective **January 1, 2027** – implementation time bought a smaller fiscal note.

Would I take that deal again? **Yes** – it's a big step forward, and it's law. And remember, making sausage is all about compromise.

AND THIS IS JUST THE BEGINNING

Once the law takes effect, we'll start thinking about the next round of reforms.

TAKE THIS HOME

Six things that worked

What I'd tell anyone starting this fight in their own state.

01 Deal with the fiscal note first. SB23-011 stalled on cost. We had to rethink the entire process to get the number down.

03 Use the interim committee. Colorado's TLRC drafted and advanced our proposal when we couldn't land a sponsor on our own.

05 Make current law easy to read. Most of what nearly killed this bill in March 2024 was confusion about what the law already required.

02 Pull your own bill when you're not ready. We tabled ours twice — once for lack of data, once for lack of votes — and came back with more both times.

04 One committed sponsor matters more than the process. TLRC rejected our draft in October 2023. Rep. Mandy Lindsay carried a new bill anyway.

06 Take the amendment if that's what's on offer. Our language passed both chambers in 2023 attached to someone else's bill. The veto told us what to fix.

THE ASK

Don't copy Colorado. Beat us.

In a perfect world, we'd have:

01

Mandatory behind-the-wheel for every new driver

This is the piece we couldn't get through.

02

Driver's education for first-time drivers of any age

+70% injury & fatal crash rate, WA drivers 18–25 who never trained

Older first-time drivers get the least instruction of anyone.

03

70 hours of supervised practice

The national bar, spread over time rather than crammed before a road test.

04

Periodic recertification, on the CLE model

Pilots, doctors and lawyers all recertify, and Japan teaches at every license renewal.

⚠ **Content is everything.** Norway made skid training mandatory and novice crashes went **up**, because it built confidence faster than skill. Judgment is what we have to teach.



A good idea and a long memory.

Happy to share anything that's useful – best practices, research, fiscal memos, or what we'd do differently.

Skyler McKinley

Regional Director, Public Affairs, AAA

303-720-9200 JMcKinley@acg.aaa.com

