DATE: 28 November 2022

TO: Iowa General Assembly

FROM: Susan Fenton, Legislative Liaison, Iowa Department of Transportation

RE: Proposed Department Bill – Behind-the-Wheel Instructors for Driver’s Education

This proposed bill would allow behind-the-wheel instructors who are *not* fully licensed teachers to administer the final driving exam that is required as part of a traditional driver’s education course.

This change will increase the number of qualified individuals who are able to administer the final driver’s education driver test and expedite the young driver licensing process. Amending this law would positively impact school districts and driver education companies that are struggling to recruit and retain licensed teachers amidst the national teacher shortage.

Under current law, all driver’s education classroom content must be taught by a licensed teacher, but the on-road driving instruction may be done by a behind the wheel instructor. However, the final driving exam is required to be completed by a licensed classroom instructor.

Behind the wheel instructors are not fully licensed teachers, but they are regulated and approved by both the DOT and the Department of Education’s Board of Educational Examiners (BOEE). Often a driver’s ed program consists of just one or two classroom teachers and many behind the wheel instructors to account for the structure of traditional driver’s education (30 students in a classroom setting and 3 students in a vehicle). Requiring the final driving exam to be done by a classroom teacher poses hardship to driver’s education programs and families.

We appreciate your consideration of this proposal, and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have at 515-509-8841 or susan.fenton@iowadot.us