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## Senate follows House on drivers ed

5:01 PM Tue, May 12, 2009 | [Permalink](#) | [Yahoo! Buzz](#)[Terrence Stutz/Reporter](#) [Bio](#) | [E-mail](#) | [News tips](#)

In a scaled-back version of a bill passed by the House earlier in the day, the Senate on Tuesday tentatively voted to require that first-time applicants for a drivers license between 18 and 20 pass a six-hour driver education course. The House bill called for drivers education for new applicants between 18 and 24, but several senators objected to that age range, saying it was too much government regulation for Texans 21 and over.



Sen. Jeff Wentworth, R-San Antonio, author of the bill, argued that drivers between 18 and 24 are worse drivers than 16 and 17-year-olds. "Conventional wisdom would indicate that you have more accidents involving 16 and 17-year-olds, but that is not what the data shows," he said. Sen. John Whitmire, D-Houston, called the proposal a "huge mistake" and Sen. Dan Patrick, R-Houston, said the bill represented a "lot of government" for those closer to 25. His amendment to drop the affected age group to 18 through 20 was narrowly adopted by the Senate.

After the measure was tentatively approved 23-8, Whitmire thanked Wentworth for allowing him to vote against the idea and improve his standing among conservatives. "This is going to help my conservative ranking," he joked.

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