

**Submission
No. 78**

DRIVER EDUCATION, TRAINING AND ROAD SAFETY

Name:

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Partially Confidential

After having witnessed the doctor permission model with my grandmother (who developed Alzheimer's about 12 years ago and died last year), I'm of the belief that this system is fundamentally flawed. My grandmother's doctor had seen her for decades and although he was fully aware of her declining mental state, he continued to allow her to drive (albeit in a country town). I was horrified at the potential lethality that he was knowingly unleashing on the road. I also witnessed this process with my grandfather. He suffered from macular degeneration, but even at the point where he was quite clearly unable to really see, he still held a drivers license, obviously with the full knowledge of the doctors who saw him (again in a large country town). Towards the end of his time driving, he would take the wheel and my grandmother (in the early stages of dementia) would verbally direct him...often on long trips that took them onto the Pacific Highway. Both were only just 75 when they were developing these conditions. Strengthened and independent review processes (such as a lower driving test age) would have picked up the potential dangers to other drivers and pedestrians earlier.

I am also interested to witness the change in my mothers driving behavior (she is now 65) and am concerned that someone like her (I believe her approach on the road is not isolated) will drive unchecked for another 20 years before being subjected to any formalized testing.

In the past 3-4 years my mothers driving approach has become more cavalier. She takes right hand turns into oncoming traffic with less care for all the dangers (particularly when there are grandchildren in the car); doesn't use head checks when changing lanes and will drive at speed over speed bumps. She believes she is a good driver, but I have started to wonder whether she would pass a p-plate driving test. I believe a lot of older people probably have similar levels of over-confidence which is another reason to test earlier and more regularly.

As a result, I would like to see the re-testing laws strengthened and the age cut offs lowered to 70 or 75. People who have been driving for decades with no update need to be reminded of their falliability and current best practices in road safety and driving.