

In 1961, I signed into law a bill placing driver education in the curriculum of the public schools of our State for the first time. The course remains an elective one in our schools, but the bill we are signing today makes it almost a certainty that the new generations of Marylanders will be trained as drivers before they are ever allowed behind the wheel of an automobile. Most boys and girls are not going to wait until they are 18 before getting a license to drive and therefore they are going to be eager to enroll for the driver-education training.

I think that this new law represents a significant development in the efforts we are making in Maryland to prevent highway accidents and make motor travel safer for our citizens. It is regrettable, I think, that other bills in our safety program failed of passage at the recent session, but I am pleased to be able to sign this important safety measure into law.

REMARKS, YOUTH TRAFFIC SAFETY CONFERENCE

BALTIMORE

May 11, 1966

It is indeed gratifying to me, as Governor of Maryland to see so many young people gathered here today in search of possible solutions to our traffic problems. I commend all of you for your active participation on the Youth Traffic Safety program and hope you will leave here with greater insight into our traffic situation.

This is a very important period in your lives. You are about to embark upon many long years as motor vehicles operators. I know you have looked forward to the day when, with a newly-acquired driver's license in your pocket, you would be able to get behind the wheel of an automobile and drive off alone. You are now able to go places on your own without having to worry about bus schedules or asking your parents for a ride. Nothing gives you more of a sense of accomplishment. But just remember nothing gives you more responsibility. You now are in command of a powerful vehicle which can be employed as a useful conveyance or can be turned into a lethal weapon. The choice is up to you.

So far this year, 218 persons have died on Maryland's highways. This is an increase of 22 persons over last year's record. Statistics such as these don't mean much until we realize that these 218 people will never again be live, productive human beings. What can we do to insure