

North Dakota Coalition For Graduated Driver Licensing

Maximize Experience, Minimize Risk

How to Contact North Dakota Legislators

How to find your legislators' contact information:

If you know what legislative district you live in, [click here](#) to find biographies and contact information on legislators by district. If you don't know what legislative district you live in, you can find out by reviewing maps of the legislative districts [here](#).

Tips on contacting your legislators:

Make it brief - When contacting your elected officials, be as concise as you can be. State why you are contacting him or her; share your opinion; and ask them to vote in favor of Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL). Be sure to include the bill number: [HB1256](#).

Make it personal - Your message will be most persuasive if you tell your elected officials why the issue is of importance to you personally.

Make it timely - Be sure to communicate with enough time for them to consider constituent input before they vote.

How to contact your legislators:

During a legislative session, a legislator can be reached at the State Capitol through e-mail or by leaving a message with the legislative telephone message center at 1-888-NDLEGIS (635-3447) or 701-328-3373 (local). Otherwise, a legislator can be reached by mail, telephone, or e-mail at the address listed in the legislator's bio (see link above).

Many legislators have forums, town halls and special events in their districts on the weekends throughout session. E-mail your legislator and inquire if they have a newsletter or ask to be notified of such district events. These forums are great opportunities to get to know your legislator better and share your opinions on GDL.

Letters/E-mail

Letters – Following are examples of how to address a letter to an elected official.

Senators
The Honorable (full name)
Street Address
City, ND, Zip Code

Representatives
The Honorable (full name)
Street Address
City, ND, Zip Code

Dear Senator Last Name,

Dear Representative Last Name,

When writing to the Chairperson of a Committee or to the Speaker of the House, address them as "Dear Mr. Chairman / Madam Chairwoman" or "Dear Mr. Speaker / Madam Speaker."

E-mail – While personal contact is often most effective, the use of e-mail is fast and easy. If you chose this method of communicating with your elected officials, take care that your message is as substantive and individualized as possible. Do not bcc or cc (blind carbon copy and carbon copy) as this will increase the likelihood the e-mail will end up in the legislator's junk mail. Due to the volume of e-mails legislators receive, the "subject" line of your e-mail is most important. Be sure it's specific and to the point. Examples are "Support Graduated Licensing", "Parents Support GDL", and "Save Lives - Vote Yes on House Bill 1256" and so on.

Sample e-mails:

1. (Constituent parent example – general)

Dear Senator/Representative (Last Name),

As the parent of a teenager and a resident of your district, I feel North Dakota's current licensing system doesn't protect young teen drivers and other motor vehicle occupants. A system that focuses on providing experience while limiting risk, such as a graduated driver licensing system (GDL), makes sense. Your support of GDL would greatly be appreciated.

2. (Constituent example – general)

Dear Senator/Representative (Last Name),

As a resident of your district, I'd like for you to support a graduated driver licensing system (GDL) when it comes up for a vote in the 2011 session. The number of crashes involving young teens in our state is unacceptable and it's time for North Dakota to provide a system that addresses the areas of greatest risk. Save lives, reduce injuries...please support GDL.

3. (For medical or law enforcement professionals)

Dear Senator/Representative (Last Name),

As an (emergency room doctor, pediatrician, law enforcement, EMT, etc), I have seen firsthand the devastation that car crashes cause for both the accident victims and the families involved. Before allowing our teen drivers to make important decisions on their own, let's do everything we can to make them the best drivers possible. Please vote yes on HB1256 to save North Dakotans lives.

Thank you for your support,

Be sure to include your name and contact information

Talking points:

- Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death among North Dakota teenagers.
- One in every five fatal crashes in North Dakota involves a teen driver making the issue both a traffic safety and public health concern.
- Driver inexperience is a common factor in most teen crashes.
- Graduated driver licensing is one of the few tools that is effective in reducing the crash risk of new drivers.
- GDL keeps novice teen drivers out of high-risk situations, protecting them and others on the road while they gain driving experience.
- North Dakota is the only state that has not yet made changes to the drivers licensing system known to reduce young driver crashes.

NEW! To make contacting your legislators easier, the ND Legislative website now has web-based forms available. To send either a general message, or your viewpoint on a specific bill, go to <http://www.legis.nd.gov/> and click on "Contact your Legislator: Send a Message" in the right column. The feature can identify your district legislators based on your house number and zip code.

Members of the House Transportation Committee are:

Dan Ruby - Chairman (HB1256 sponsor)
Dave Weiler - Vice Chairman
Lois Delmore
Robert Frantsvog
Edmund Gruchalla (HB1256 sponsor)
Brenda Heller
Kathy Hogan
RaeAnn G. Kelsch
Scott Louser
Kenton Onstad
Mark S. Owens
Gary R. Sukut
Don Vigesaa
Robin Weisz