

**Rabbi Yitzchak Friedman**

**SUPPORT**

**HB 1191 Drivers' Licenses-Older Licensees-in-Person**

My wife was walking home from synagogue and she was run over by a motorist that was 89 years old. The police report indicated that the driver wasn't aware of my wife's presence. There were no signs of the driver having applied the brakes, prior to the collision. He told my neighbor, that he had hit a "little girl". My late wife was 5 feet, 5 inches. How was this driver allowed to operate a motor vehicle?

After my wife's passing, I was not upset at the driver. He probably didn't realize the slow decline in his reaction speed. However, when he refused to give up his keys, I was incensed. However, in thinking about it, I realized that it must have been hard for him to admit to his frailty.

So, why didn't his family step in? Not every spouse or child is up to the hard-love it takes to face a loved one, who views the car as his key to independence. We tried taking the keys from my own Mom, but she was in denial. My aunt just fired her doctor for suggesting that she not drive at night. It didn't bother her that said doctor knew her for 50 years; he is her first cousin. My physician says that people that can hardly walk are routinely on the road. However, he can only suggest that they get retested.

With doctors and family at a loss to handle the situation, what can be done to convince seniors that are no longer able to drive, to give up the keys? The piece of legislation presented before you, is that first step. Civil rights are critical, and we should not discriminate by age! However, civil rights do not trump my wife's rights to life, liberty and pursuit of happiness.