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**Testimony in Support of HB 1191**

**Drivers' Licenses-Older Licensees – In-Person Renewal**

Driving is a critical risk for older people and those they come in contact with.

After 35 years of age, our bodies change, our abilities change, and so do the risks that these changes create for ourselves and those we come in contact with.

The body is built to last 95 years. But between the ages of 50 and 70 most people lose about 1/3 of their muscle strength, and from 70-80 they lose another 30%.

Loss of muscle mass, slowed reflexes, and visual deterioration all figure into driving risk for older adults.

Doctors know that by 45 years of age most people have trouble standing on their non-dominant leg for 30 seconds (the “one leg stand test”), and by 55 years, a majority of adults lose the ability to support and swing their hips. (Doctors do the “duck walk test” to see if this ability is affected in people.) It is possible to stave off the effects of aging with exercise, practice, focus and working at it. That is until people enter their 80's. After 80, it will clearly become an issue.

Doctors also see that along with these functional deficiencies comes fear of losing independence. Changes from aging that last more than 3 years are no longer reversible. And, we also see that admitting these deficiencies becomes harder with aging.

It does seem that this information could lead one to conclude that testing to assess skills loss might be needed. But the data we have at present show that asking people to demonstrate where they are in their abilities by just presenting themselves, is often enough to cause people to confront body changes that they are likely aware of, but are not ones they want to admit or risk having noted by others.

The bill by Delegate Dana Stein addresses the issue in a way that provides the control to the person requesting the privilege of driving. It should be enough. I am thankful to Delegate Stein for addressing the issue and hope the medical information shared helps you understand the scientific reasoning for the sound legislation proposed. I urge a favorable vote on this bill.