

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

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\$2.00 231 YEARS OF SERVICE TUESDAY, MARCH 13, 2018 VOL. 91, NO. 224, 3/13/18 FINAL

New study finds fatality rate rising among older drivers

Better road designs, signage would help

By [Ed Blazina](#) - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

States should do more to make roads safer for older drivers, who are at increasing risk of dying in crashes, a national study released Tuesday recommended.

The fatality rate of drivers age 65 or older is increasing even faster than their percentage of all drivers, according to the 27-page study by TRIP, a national transportation research group.

TRIP said larger road signs with brighter lights, more roundabouts to reduce turns across traffic and longer entrance and exit lanes would help all drivers but especially older ones. Those drivers can have diminished eyesight and reduced reflexes that lead to problems in estimating the speed and distance of other vehicles and safely making driving decisions, the study said.

"The positive sign is more older Americans are leading more active lifestyles," said Rocky Moretti, director of policy and research for TRIP. "The negative is an even higher percentage are dying in traffic accidents."

From 2012 to 2016, the study said, the number of U.S. drivers age 65 or older increased from about 36 million to 41.7 million (about 16 percent) but the number of older drivers killed jumped from 3,741 to 4,204, or about a 21 percent increase. Part of the reason older drivers die from injuries in crashes is they aren't as healthy as younger drivers.

The best way to help all drivers, but especially older ones, would be to "eliminate the ambiguity" that insufficient road signs, poor lighting and other shortcomings can create, Mr. Moretti said.

"The challenge is to create a roadway environment for older drivers, and really all drivers, that's as safe as it can be," he said. "These are cost-effective changes."

The study showed that in 2015 74 percent of the fatal crashes for older drivers occurred in the daytime, 70 percent on weekdays and 67 percent involved other vehicles. The numbers for all fatalities were starkly different: 49 percent were in daylight, 59 percent on weekdays and 44 percent involved another vehicle.

Intersections seem to be a particular problem for older drivers. In 2016, 37 percent of fatal crashes with one driver 65 or older occurred at intersections but only 20 percent of fatal crashes for drivers under 65 occurred at intersections.

"Older drivers generally have problems selecting appropriate gaps in oncoming traffic and estimating the speed of oncoming vehicles with respect to left turns off a mainline highway," the study said. "Each advancing year of age after 65 increases by 8 percent the odds of getting into a crash that involves turning left."

In 2016, Pennsylvania had 1.9 million drivers 65 or older, about 21 percent of all drivers in the state, and the state ranks in the top 10 nationally in the number of older drivers and fatalities. About 22 percent of the state's fatalities that year, 267 people, occurred in crashes with at least one driver 65 or older.

"It would behoove us to recognize that, understand that, and look at our road designs and see what we could do to help," said Jason Wagner, manager director of the Pennsylvania Highway Information Association.

Rich Kirkpatrick, spokesman for the state Department of Transportation, said the number of deaths involving drivers 65 and older has dropped from 300 in 2014, to 279 in 2015 to 267 in 2016. The state has taken steps in construction projects to provide larger signs; rumble strips between lanes and on edges to keep drivers from

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\$2.00 231 YEARS OF SERVICE WEDNESDAY, MARCH 14, 2018 VOL. 91, NO. 225, 3/14/18 FINAL

Lamb, Saccone in virtual tie



Supporters of State Rep. Rick Saccone are astonished by the tight race as returns come in at an election night party Tuesday at the Younglough Country Club in Elizabeth Township. Corbin Lamb supporters at the Hilton Garden Inn Southpointe are equally surprised as the election moves into a virtual tie. Absentee ballots were being counted late Tuesday.

Pennsylvania's 18th District race captivates nation

By Chris Pottler
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

The race between Republican Rick Saccone and Democrat Corbin Lamb for the 18th Congressional District was in a call after the absentee ballots are counted, voters or candidates close, and it was the race between the two candidates that was the most watched in the state Tuesday night.

Mr. Saccone of Elizabeth Township, and Mr. Lamb of Mt. Lebanon, had a hand in the special election campaign flooded with money. While 90 percent of the vote count in the contest was close to call, Mr. Lamb was ahead by more than 200 votes, but absentee ballots were still out. Washington County absentee voters were being counted such cases, three voters in some precincts must provide evidence of fraud or error in the vote counting and pay a \$50 fee. If they do not, the vote is discarded.

The comparison includes the Green Party filed such a challenge in 52 Allegheny County precincts, where the results are being challenged. The results are being challenged in 52 Allegheny County precincts, where the results are being challenged. The results are being challenged in 52 Allegheny County precincts, where the results are being challenged.

After the 2016 presidential election, the Green Party filed such a challenge in 52 Allegheny County precincts, where the results are being challenged. The results are being challenged in 52 Allegheny County precincts, where the results are being challenged.

Observers said the close race meant that while neither side could claim victory, portions of main as tight as it appears. If both could already claim some vindication.

Republicans can say, "We took the best shot the Democrats could give — a candidate who fits the district well — and we survived it in a fairly strong position," said Chris Borick, a pollster at Marquette College.

Democrats, meanwhile, may say that Mr. Lamb had shown that candidates can be competitive in districts, soon in 2018 by President Donald Trump, Terry Madonna, a veteran pollster at Franklin & Marshall College, said. "Moving it forward, the results are being challenged in 52 Allegheny County precincts, where the results are being challenged. The results are being challenged in 52 Allegheny County precincts, where the results are being challenged."

SEE ELECTION PAGE A-6

Tillerson fired in diplomatic shake-up

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump unexpectedly dumped Secretary of State Rex Tillerson on Tuesday — via Twitter — and picked CIA Director Mike Pompeo to shift from America's spy chief to its top diplomat.

The abrupt announcement ended the turbulent tenure of the man who reportedly called the president "a mess" and wanted to stay, and deepened the disarray in the Trump administration.

The plans to oust Mr. Tillerson had been drawn up months ago but the timing caught even senior White House officials unawares. The firing was the latest in an episode of administration officials, including those in Mr. Trump's inner circle, with the president's approval.

SEE SHAKEUP PAGE A-4

Disruptive in classroom? Or free speech denied?

By Bill Schaciner
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

RUP student in dispute with school, professor

But on Feb. 28 — as discussion turned to transgender issue — students and white male privilege — a disruptive episode of a student's right to express bias against a professor's authority to lead her class — she speaks with an instructor.

The class is called "Self, Sin and Salvation."

Shalens in this special topic course in religious studies at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. He is also a member of the class from returning to the class. They also are supposed to participate in class.

SEE SPEECH PAGE A-2

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But Pennsylvania has done some things TRIP recommended, including larger signs with brighter lights, more roundabouts to reduce turns across traffic and longer entrance and exit lanes. Older drivers can search for TRIP. "The negative is that they have diminished eyesight and an even higher percentage are dying in traffic accidents," said Rocky Moretti, director of policy and research for TRIP. "The negative is that they have diminished eyesight and an even higher percentage are dying in traffic accidents."

SEE DRIVERS PAGE A-2

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Dynasty high 25, tonight's low 23, Page A-12	Classified	D-4	Letters to Editor	A-10	Prospective	A-11	Explore old stores and photos from Pittsburgh's past on The Diggs. bit.ly/TheDiggs
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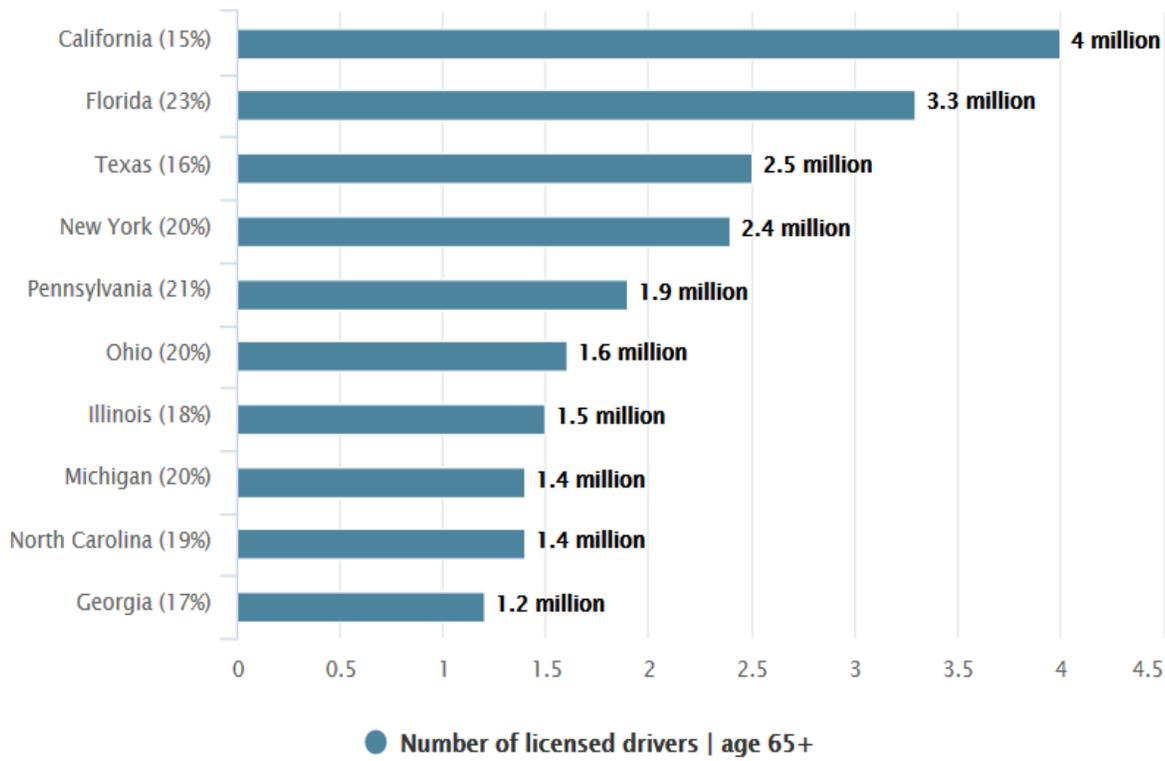
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Statistics for older drivers in Pennsylvania

A study by TRIP shows where Pennsylvania drivers 65 and older rank in terms of fatal accidents.

Number of licensed drivers, by state, age 65+, 2016

Including percentage of licensed drivers that are age 65+ for selected states



Number of fatalities involving at least one 65+ driver, 2016

Including percentage of fatalities involving at least one 65+ for selected states

