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Net RMA Safe Driving Essay: Bring Driver's Ed Back

Most vehicles nowadays are equipped with handles near both the driver's and passenger seats. I always wondered what they were for. After all, I could hop right in unassisted, we weren't doing much four wheel drive type activities, so I just couldn't wrap my head around their use. That is, until I got my driver's permit and realized that they were a universal grip for parents everywhere forced into the front seat with their new drivers!

All joking aside, I was fortunate to have an engaged parent who made sure I knew all the road rules, and who explained different driving skills as I learned to drive. They also emphasized how important it is to not be distracted by phones, the radio, or other technology while I am driving, and made sure I knew that driving is a huge responsibility.

Since the change to privatized and parent-based driver's ed, there is no real way to insure everyone is getting the same driving education, practice, or experience. My parent's generation took driver's ed as a class in high school, signing up to get documented driving hours through the school. Nowadays, everything is online. Without the classroom, no one really knows how much of the material is actually learned. The amount of actual driving practice will vary widely, with only a driver's log as a requirement.

I fully understand that budgetary concerns and the need for college classes has pushed driver's ed out of the high schools, but it is my opinion that we need to bring back in person driver's ed in some form. It is too easy to simply skim the online learning for test facts, and not fully understand all of the road rules, or the consequences of unsafe habits. And who wouldn't benefit from driving practice with someone other than a parent?

With summer right around the corner, this would be the perfect time to take in person driver's ed. The other drivers on the road will thank you, and so will the passenger side handle!