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# IDAHO DRIVING AGE DECREASES TO 15

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It was a quiet finish to what had been a noisy battle in recent years.

The House partook in only limited discussion Wednesday as it voted 69-14 for a bill lowering the basic driving age from 16 to 15 but which would clear state highways of all 14-year-old drivers. After long battles between farm interests and city lawmakers, the Legislature two years ago restricted driving privileges for 14-year-olds, allowing county sheriffs to decide when to grant special permits.

But Rep. Mike Simpson, R-Blackfoot, said that has caused much confusion from one county to the next. "Not all the sheriffs are doing it the same," he said.

"We need to set a firm, black and white law that people can read and understand," he said. "It will take a lot of heat off the sheriffs."

The legislation goes to the governor.

Idaho used to allow 14-year-olds to drive. Two years ago, a new system was enacted, allowing 14 and 15-year-olds licenses if they could obtain parental permission and convince the local sheriff they needed to drive.