Family of Florida Teen Calling for Changes for Florida Driving Laws

By: Carmen Dellutri

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The parents of Teddy Jeter understand that changing Florida's teen driving laws won't bring their son back, but they are hoping that stricter passenger rules could prevent other families from experiencing a similar tragedy.

Teddy and two friends were killed when their vehicle lost control and hit a tree. It was the first time Teddy's parents had let him ride in a car with another teen. While he was supposed to travel home from school with a friend, somewhere along the way their plans changed and Teddy ended up behind the wheel.

"They were going to go get a friend give him the ride and come back. And I'm sure my son didn't think it as a big deal. But somewhere along the way they swapped drivers, which we don't know why of course because they're not here to tell us," his mother Liesha told WJHG.com.

Florida is one of only three states in the country that allows 16 year old drivers to have non-adult passengers in the vehicle. The Jeters are working to enact tougher restrictions in the state. "We just feel if, that law had been in place he would not have gone and it would have been a different outcome" Liesha said.

As we have previously discussed on this Florida Injury Blog, other states have these rules in place for good reason. A 2012 study by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety showed a strong association between the number and age of the passengers present in-vehicle and the risk of a teen driver dying in a traffic crash.

Compared to driving with no passengers, a 16- or 17-year-old driver's fatality risk increases 44 percent when carrying one passenger younger than 21 and no older passengers. The risk quadruples when carrying three or more passengers younger than 21.

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To learn more about your legal options, contact our experienced Cape Coral injury attorneys for a free consultation.