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Every state has its own transportation agency that handles driver's licensing, so standardizing laws for new drivers isn't as easy as it sounds – even if some safety advocates find the inconsistency alarming. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

Many states enact tougher requirements for new drivers

Terry Collins
USA TODAY

A new wave of state laws is enforcing stricter requirements for new drivers, but states still can't agree on how much practice is needed. • While most states have some form of graduated driver's licensing laws, ranging from as low as 20 and as high as 70 supervised hours, more states are looking into adopting tougher mandates for young people, said Jonathan Adkins, CEO of the Governors Highway Safety Association, a Washington, DC-based nonprofit.

Florida, Washington and New Jersey tightened up requirements for new drivers in 2025, but even these new laws have inconsistent requirements. The new laws come as some traffic safety advocates say the United States would benefit from more uniform laws on the topic.

"There should be a national law for teen drivers," said Cheryl Giles, the longtime owner of Lakeland Atlantic Driving School in Winter Haven, Florida, which conducts about 1,000 student driving tests annually. "We desperately need some consistency."

Meanwhile, motor vehicle crashes continue to be among the leading causes of death for teens in the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Teen drivers also face a disproportionately higher risk of crashes in comparison with older drivers, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reports.

"I would call it an epidemic right now, and we all

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"Whether you are in Virginia, Florida, Utah or even in the most rural parts of the country, the roads can be very dangerous places, especially when you don't fully understand the dangers of driving."

Tammy Gweedo McGee
Safe driving advocate

Reshaping the state

Is Trump's redistricting push constitutional?

Hayleigh Colombo
Indianapolis Star
USA TODAY NETWORK

It's unclear if Gov. Mike Braun will call a special session to redraw the state's congressional maps mid-decade to help shore up the Republican Party's U.S. House majority in the 2026 midterm elections.

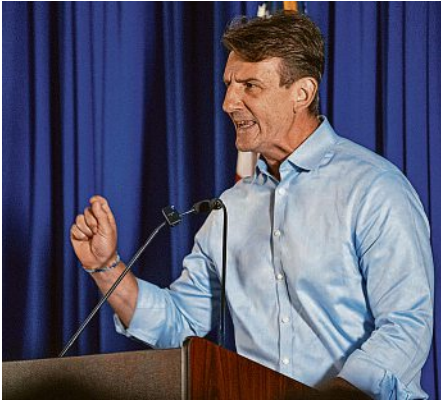
But is it constitutional?

Experts in constitutional law and gerrymandering contacted by IndyStar said they believe mid-decade redistricting attempts would pass muster with courts. But they're expecting litigation anyway if Indiana Republicans go forward with the idea now that Vice President JD Vance has visited Indiana to make the case to top Republicans.

"It is constitutional for states to redistrict more than once in a 10-year period, or really anytime they want to," said Gerard N. Magliocca, a law professor at Indiana University. "It's less of a legal question than just a political question: Do you think it's fair to redraw the districts purely for partisan reasons? Now look, will it be challenged? Sure."

The U.S. Supreme Court established that mid-decade redistricting was allowed in a 2006 ruling in a Texas case after a 2003 redistricting attempt

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U.S Representative Frank Mrvan speaks during a press conference on Aug. 7, after vice president J.D. Vance's visit to Indiana to meet with Governor Mike Braun over redrawing congressional district lines. ADIN PARKS/INDYSTAR



A homeless encampment near the Lincoln Memorial is cleared by employees of the city government on Aug. 14 in Washington. WIN MCNAMEE/GETTY IMAGES

DC cracks down on homeless camps

Christopher Cann
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON – Under the blazing sun, people living in homeless encampments in Washington packed up their belongings before authorities moved in with garbage trucks on Aug. 14 as President Donald Trump's crackdown on the nation's capital ramped up.

At a camp a few miles from the Lincoln Memorial and the Kennedy Center, about eight people broke down their tents with the help of city workers and homeless advocacy groups.

"(The president) is targeting us and persecuting us," said David Beatty, a man living in the encampment that

Trump posted a photo of on social media Aug. 10. "He wants to take our freedom away."

The moves came days after Trump assumed federal control of the city's police department and mobilized the National Guard, declaring a "crime emergency" and vowing to clear homeless people off the streets.

Cities across the United States, including longtime Democratic strongholds such as Los Angeles and San Francisco, have increased homeless sweeps and encampment closures. A landmark 2024 Supreme Court decision that permitted laws banning people from sleeping outside, even if they have nowhere else to go, led to a broad crack-

down in dozens of cities, towns and rural communities nationwide.

This year, the U.S. Park Police has disbanded about 70 encampments from federal parks in the capital, said White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt.

The speedy operations came with little warning, and local officials and social workers sought to get ahead of the anticipated operations. In mid-August, workers with the District of Columbia's Department of Human Services visited each of the known encampments, warning of the impending crackdown and offering residents beds in local shelters and places to store belongings.

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