

Written Testimony on House Bill 2157
House Committee on Transportation

Presented by the
Kansas Highway Patrol

February 10, 2015

The Kansas Highway Patrol appreciates the opportunity to provide written testimony on changes set forth in House Bill 2157. This bill would increase the existing fine relating to the use of safety belts, and in addition, create the seat belt safety fund.

A principal function of the Kansas Highway Patrol is to enforce traffic and other laws of this state relating to highways, vehicles and drivers of vehicles. Consistent with this function, is the Agency's Mission and Goals, which state in part that the "Patrol will promote the use of child restraints and safety belts through aggressive enforcement and educational programs" and we will "reduce the number and severity of traffic crashes through the enforcement of impaired driving and occupant protection laws." Educational efforts followed by enforcement is an effective strategy to achieving compliance with traffic regulations. Penalties for violating regulations must also be effective to ensure this strategy is successful. When considering Kansas' fine schedule, the current adult seatbelt violation does not compare and does not reinforce the enforcement side of the overall equation.

While HB 2157 further enhances our mission and goals, it also strengthens our partnership with the traffic safety community, cultivating a collaborative effort aimed at reducing deaths and injuries to occupants involved in motor vehicle crashes. The funds generated by those who violate the law can then be spent on educating our teens and young people, increase awareness, and provide resources for programs like Seatbelts Are For Everyone (SAFE). Programs like SAFE, bring law enforcement into schools and communities in a cooperative effort to change a culture of behavior in a positive way.

In closing, the Kansas Highway Patrol fully supports HB 2157 because it will undoubtedly save lives. One life needlessly lost is one too many, especially when the opportunity exists to save it. This bill increases that opportunity and we encourage you to vote in support.

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