



February 6, 2015

The Honorable Richard Proehl  
Kansas House of Representatives  
300 SW 10<sup>th</sup> Street  
Topeka, KS 66612

RE: Letter of Support of HB 2157 and SB 82

Children's Mercy Hospital supports the SAFE Saves Lives legislative efforts. Traffic safety programs such as Seatbelts Are For Everyone (SAFE) and Car Seat Education with Distribution of free car seats to children are evidence based interventions that make a difference in children's lives.

Buckling children in age- and size-appropriate car seats, booster seats, and seat belts reduces the risk of serious and fatal injuries. The data shows that:

- Car seat use reduces the risk for death to infants (aged <1 year) by 71%; and to toddlers (aged 1–4 years) by 54% in passenger vehicles.
- Booster seat use reduces the risk for serious injury by 45% for children aged 4–8 years when compared with seat belt use alone.
- For older children and adults, seat belt use reduces the risk for death and serious injury by approximately half.

The barriers to sustaining the educational and distribution program funded with federal highway dollars are real. The funding of traffic safety programs with federal funding through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has decreased over the past few years. This has resulted challenges in traffic safety educators and advocates meeting the needs of those we serve. There is a need for sustainable funding to develop and maintain programs that reach out to the most at risk drivers and passengers. These programs are consistent in reaching the most at risk in reducing the risk of injury and death in a motor vehicle crash. The price of convertible car seats for children under 4 years of age is about \$70 and the cost of a belt positioning booster is less than \$20; however, many of our families face tough choices: feeding the family or buying the car seat or booster. Buckling up doesn't cost a red cent... but still we need the support for educational and mass media campaigns.

With your support of SB 82 and HB 2157 and— portions of the monies collected by traffic safety violators will help support both the SAFE and the Car Seat Distribution Program as well as traffic safety programs reaching across the life span. Thanks for your support.

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cc: Betty Boraz, Kansas Senate House Transportation Committee Assistant