



Written Testimony on Senate Bill 274
House Committee on Transportation

Prepared by
Lieutenant Adam Winters
Kansas Highway Patrol

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The Kansas Highway Patrol appreciates the opportunity to provide written testimony on changes set forth in Senate Bill 274. This bill would increase the existing fine relating to the non-use of safety belts from \$10 to \$30 and in addition, would create the seat belt safety fund.

The 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 will "reduce the number and severity of traffic crashes through the enforcement of impaired driving and occupant protection laws". An educational effort followed by enforcement is a proven strategy that will aid our agency in achieving compliance with traffic regulations. When considering Kansas' fine schedule, the current adult seat belt violation does not reinforce the enforcement side of the equation. Penalties for violating regulations must be effective to ensure this strategy is successful.

While SB 274 enhances our mission and goals, it also strengthens our partnership with the traffic safety community. This bill will cultivate 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 will be spent on educating our teens and young people, increasing awareness, and providing resources for programs like Seatbelts Are For Everyone (SAFE). Programs like SAFE bring law enforcement into schools and communities in a cooperative effort with community members to change a culture of behavior in a positive way.

In closing, the Kansas Highway Patrol supports SB 274 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 of it.

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