

The Current Role of Teen Seat Belt Use and Education in Kansas



KANSAS **Traffic Safety**
Resource OFFICE

Testimony by Norraine Wingfield/David Corp

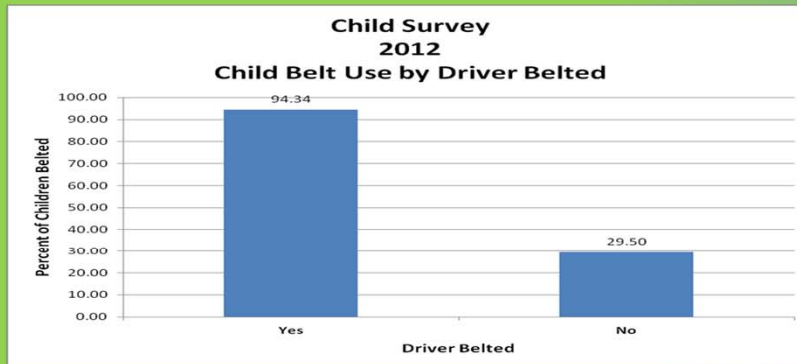


Good Morning Mr. Chairman...members of the Transportation Committee. I am Dave Corp, Law Enforcement Liaison for the Kansas Department of Transportation and this is Norraine Wingfield with the Kansas Traffic Safety Resource Office which is the educational arm of KDOT and provides traffic safety education and resources for the state and coordinates the SAFE program. We appreciate the opportunity, to testify on Senate bill 82. We came to you in April and visited about the major gaps in occupant protection education and enforcement and we are here today to provide you information on a successful data proven occupant protection program.

We'd like to begin by showing you a snippet video that uniquely shows one of the key problems we face in occupant protection in Kansas:

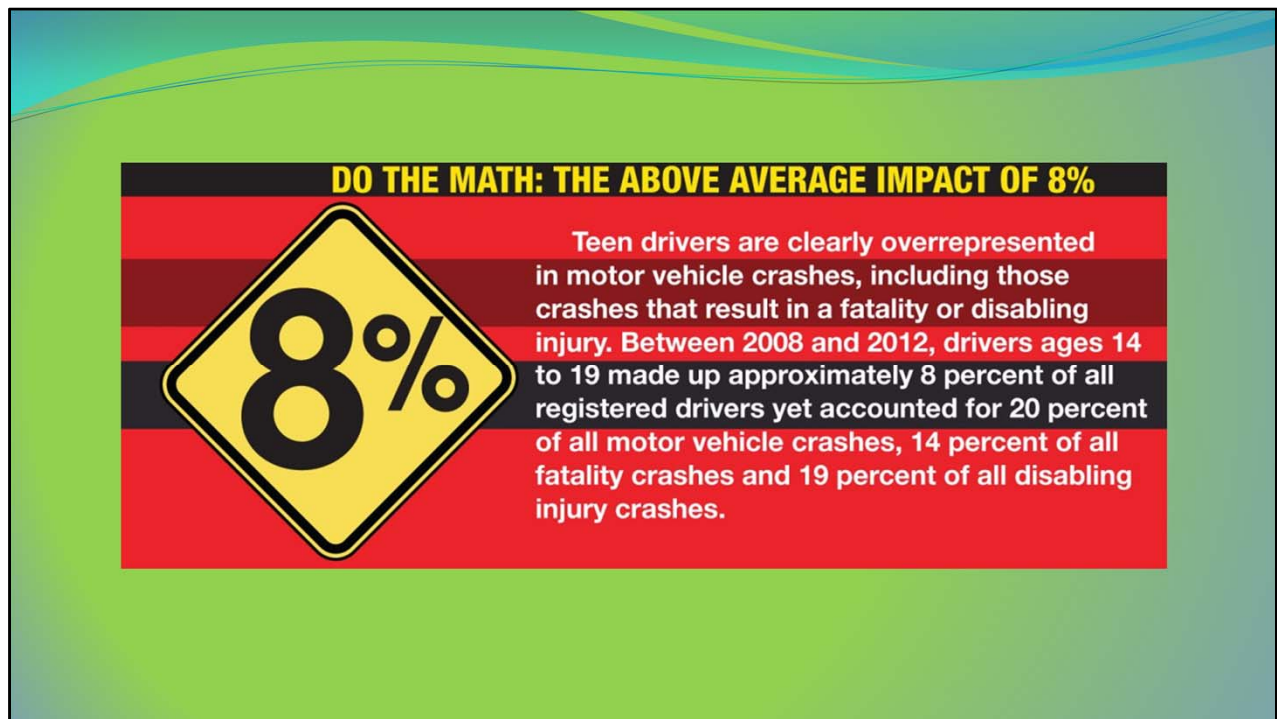


WHY ARE WE HERE TODAY?



Children are much more likely to be buckled up if the driver is also belted. If the driver is belted, about 94% of the children are also belted. If the driver is not belted, only about 30% of the observed children were also belted.

KDOT has as the goal of its SHSP to cut-in-half the number of fatalities from motor vehicle crashes by 2029. To achieve this goal we need to look at providing education and enforcement to change the traffic safety culture of our youth and adults in Kansas. We know from our observational survey that (see slide) ***Children are much more likely to be buckled up if the driver is also belted. If the driver is belted, about 94% of the children are also belted. If the driver is not belted, only about 30% of the observed children were also belted. So if the teen driver is belted—his passengers are more likely to be belted.***



We also know ***While teen drivers represent only eight percent of Kansas' licensed drivers, they are involved in 20 percent of all crashes and 14 percent of fatal crashes. These are down from 22 and 15 percent, respectively, in 2011 and may reflect the impact of the graduated driver law which first applied to teens entering the Kansas licensing system after January 1, 2010. GDL was presented to you and you implemented the legislation and we are saving lives.***

We would like to continue our efforts to provide occupant protection education to our youth and communities and build on an existing program which has seen great success here in Kansas.

Live -Zone



Let's get down to basics: See this car? The vehicle's "live-zone" is in tact. This is what's left of a crash from 2013 in Phillips County – a car driven by a 16 year old boy. The car is designed to protect the individual in a crash IF THEY HAVE THEIR SEAT BELT ON....But in this crash, the 16 year old teen, was ejected from the "live-zone" which defeated the purpose of the car's engineering, just because the teen CHOSE NOT to wear a seat belt....AND, keep this in mind for a later part of our discussion: We didn't have SAFE, the State's national award-winning teen seat belt usage program, in Phillips County.

UNsurvivable crash



This is an example of a crash involving the other 45 percent who were belted...some crashes are simply so horrific they're not survivable...but we want to deal with the ones that are

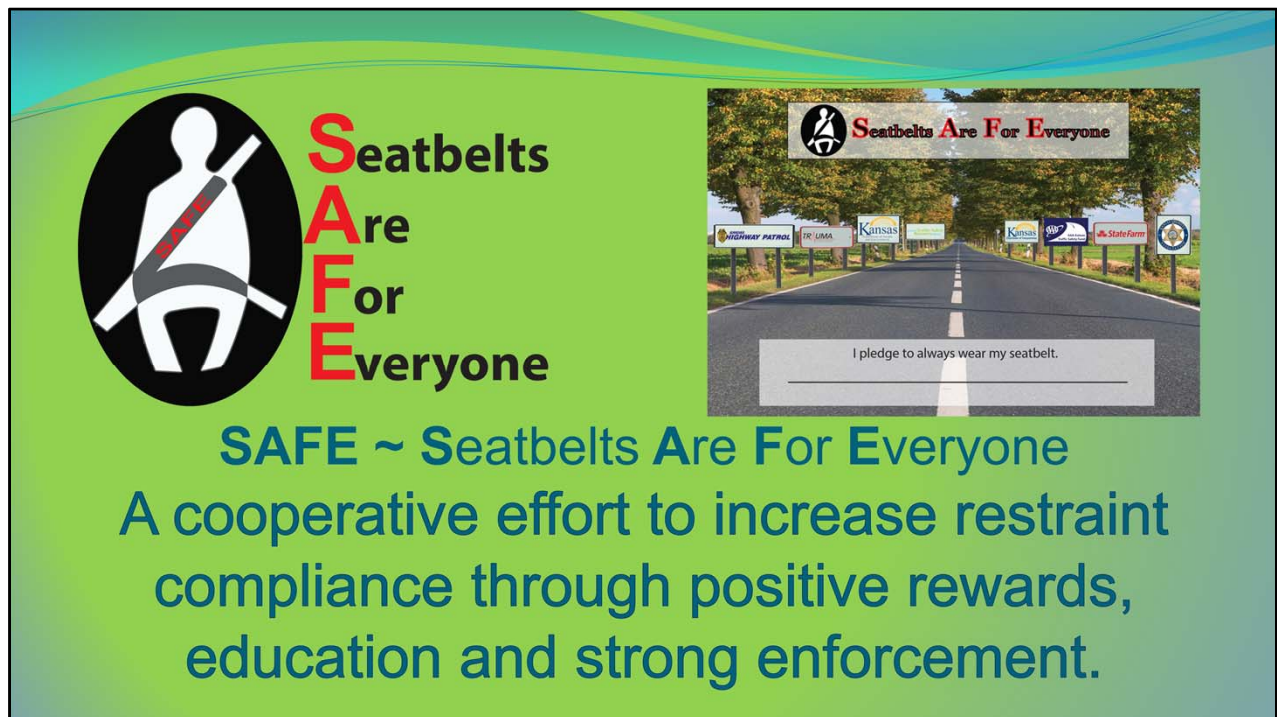
The Current Role of Seat Belts in Kansas Roadway Fatalities:

Number One most-impactful countermeasure to save lives
and reduce disabling injuries

Seat belts

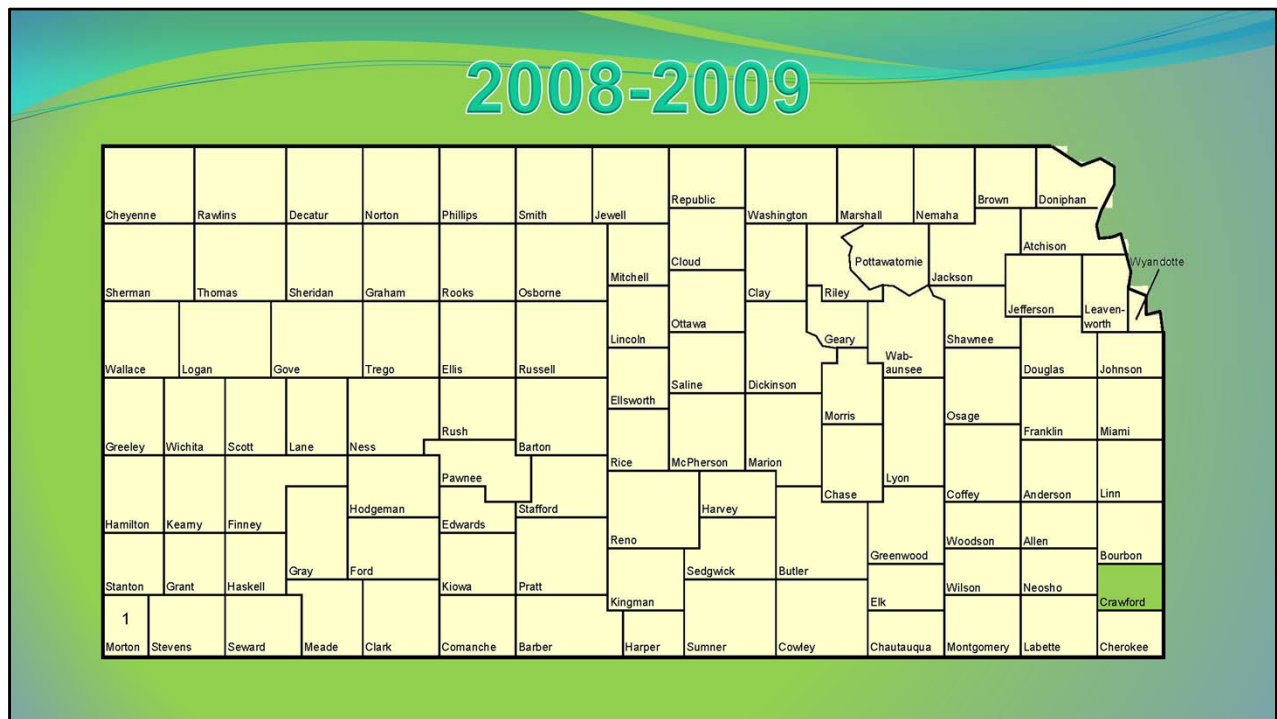
55 percent of ALL KANSAS FATALITIES are UNBELTED

The fact is – wearing a seat belt – regardless of other factors – impaired, speeding, distracted, run-off the roadway, lane departure -- will do more than any other factor, in preventing injury or death on Kansas roadways...and the technology of the vehicle or the engineering enhancements to the road...NONE OF THEM...will make a bit of difference if you don't have your seat belt on.

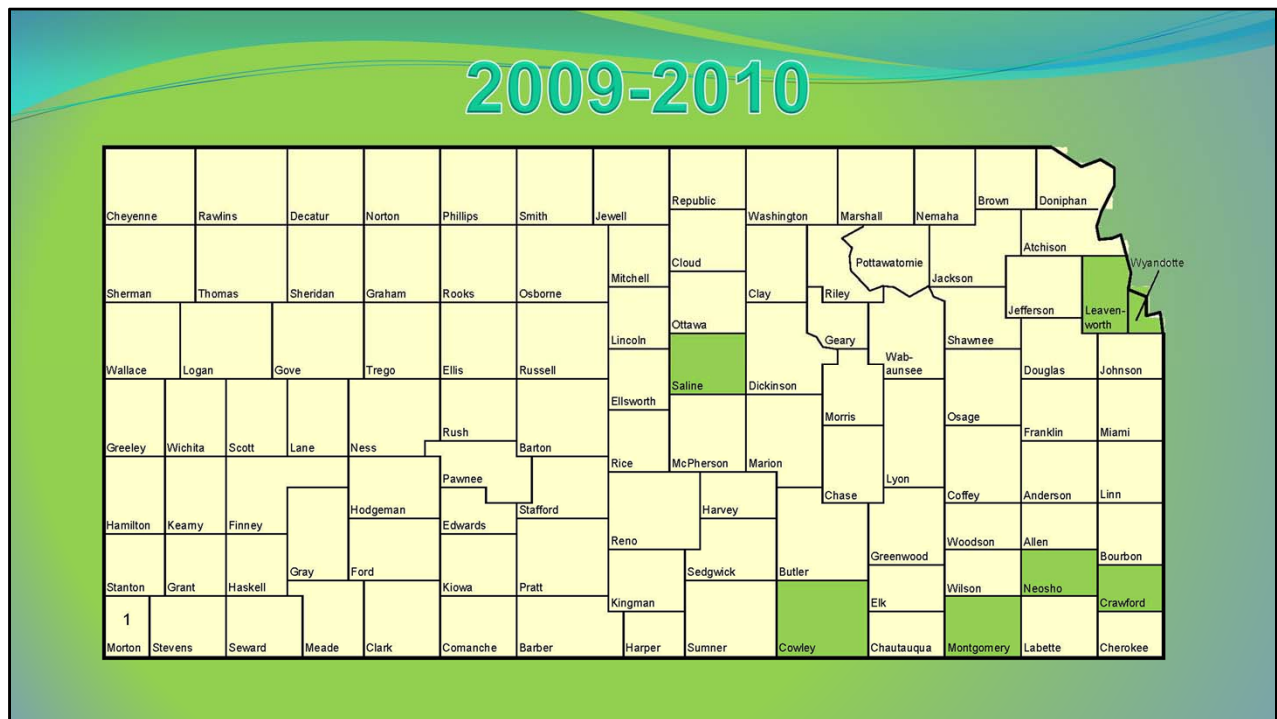


The Safe program began when 4 high school students from Ulysses Kansas lost their lives in a traffic crash, no one in the vehicle was wearing a seat belt. The program begins with Students being trained to perform observational seat belt/distracted driving surveys which they conduct in and around campus. This provides a baseline for how many of the students are wearing their seatbelts. The SAFE student ask their peers to voluntarily sign a pledge card to wear their seat belt. Over the next months of school, traffic safety education activities about seat belt use, distracted driving, impaired driving take place in and around the school and the community. Each month students sign pledge cards which are put into a drawing. Winners are selected each month and typically receive a \$25 gift card. The final component to the program is enforcement. There are 2 weeks of drastic enforcement in and around the schools. Citations are issued to anyone not wearing a seat belt. In the last months of school, the students perform a final survey to see if their seat belt rates have changed over the months of the program and final prizes are drawn from all the pledge cards. Education, Rewards and enforcement are the three components of this successful program. This program has been recognized by the National Highway safety Administration, The Governors Highway Safety Association and was recognized as one of the top programs in the nation in the AllState research project, Getting it to Click.

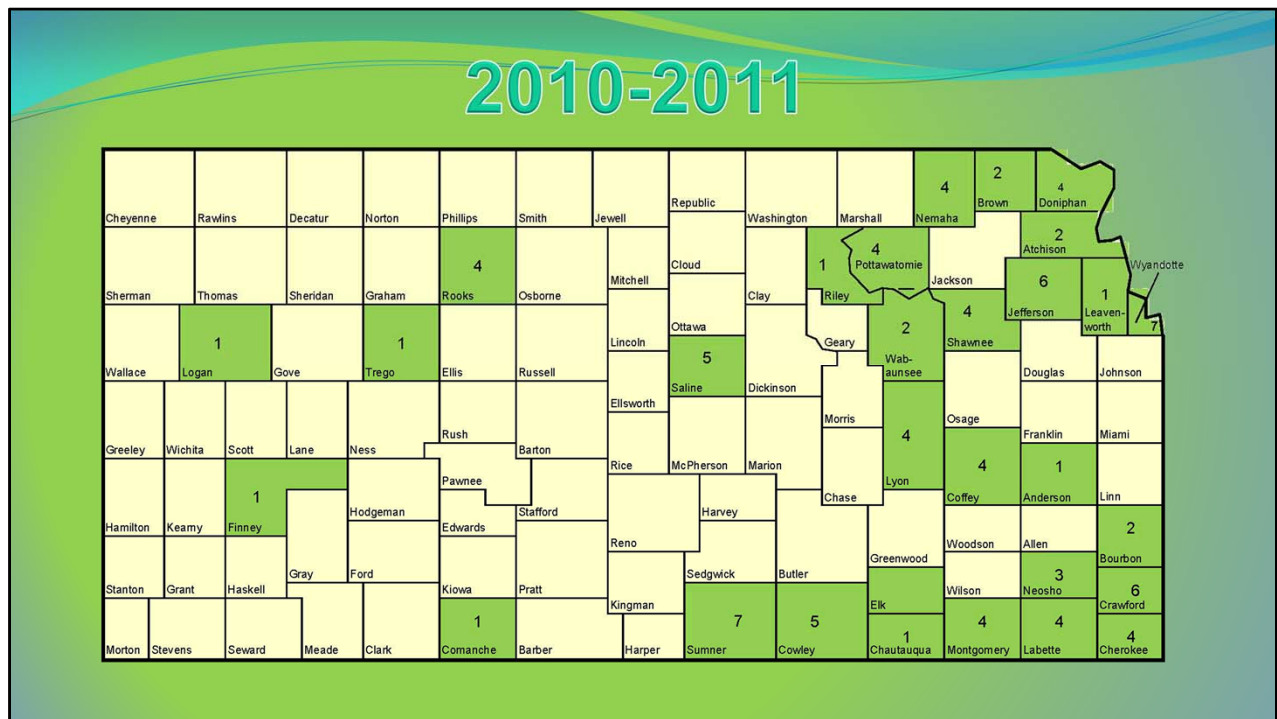
This legislation is essential to the occupant protection education programs in Kansas.



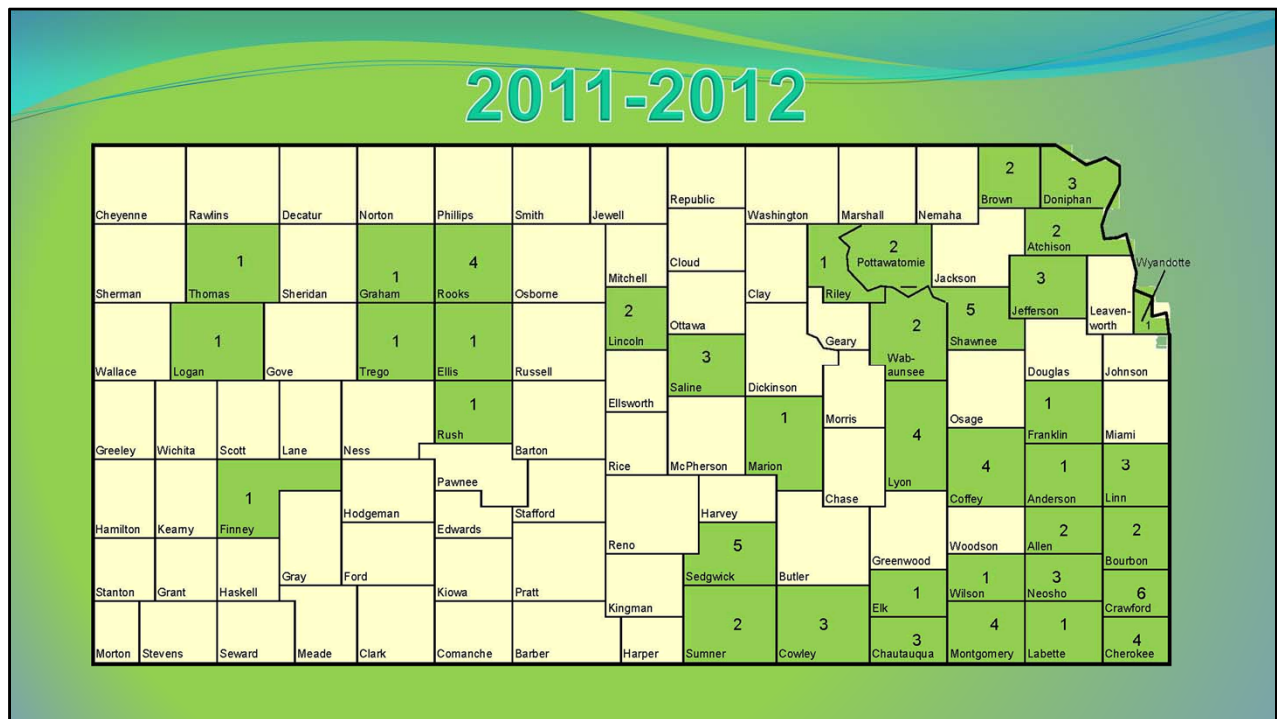
1 county
 6 schools
 Baseline survey-68%
 Final survey 84%



7 counties

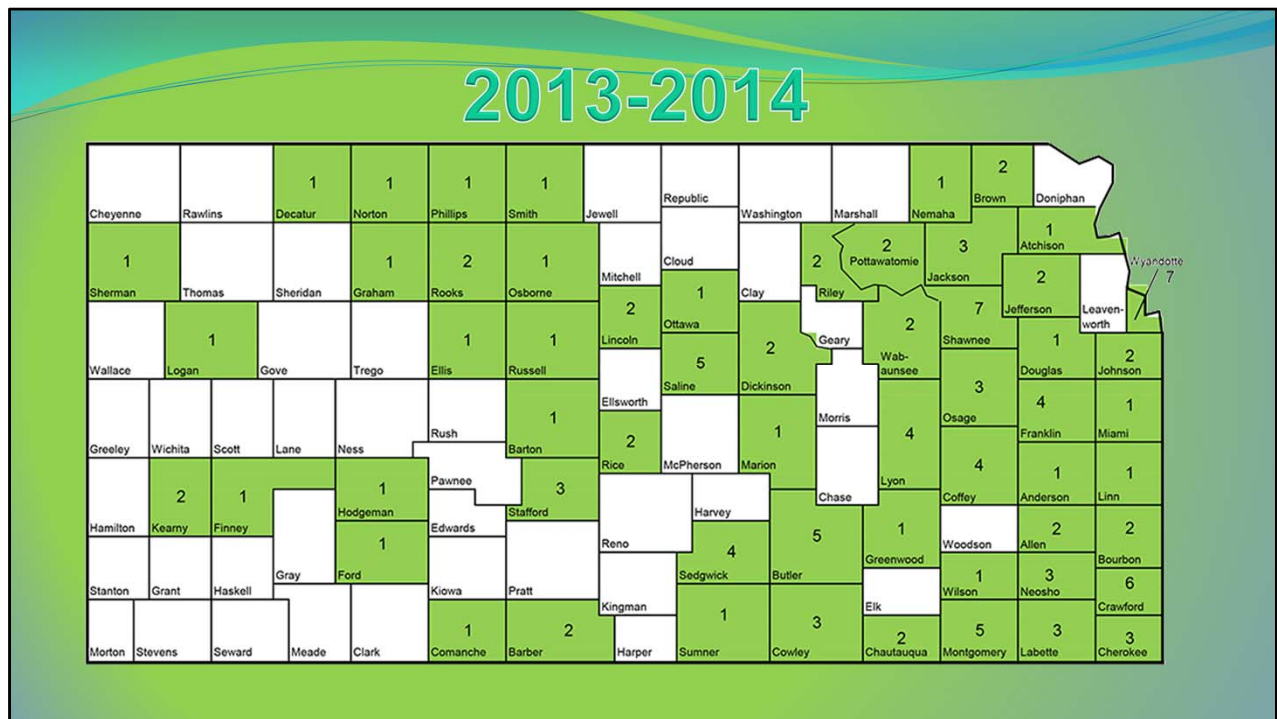


29 counties

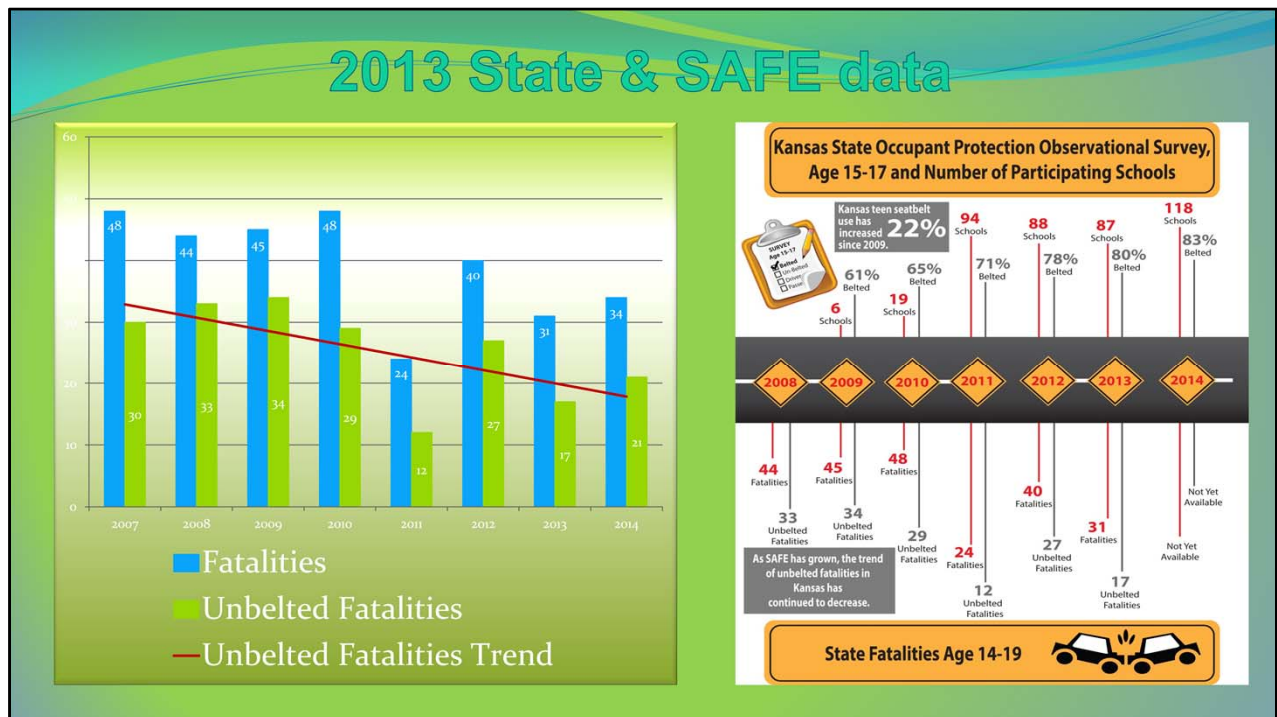


•38 Counties

- 88 Schools in 38 counties participated in the SAFE program.
- Approximately 660 Students were involved in leading peers.
- 31,913* Students attended participating schools and heard the SAFE message.
- The average baseline survey for all the schools was 72% and the average final survey was 82.0%, making the average increase across all of the participating schools 8.3%.



118 schools and 55 counties reaching over 80,000 students.

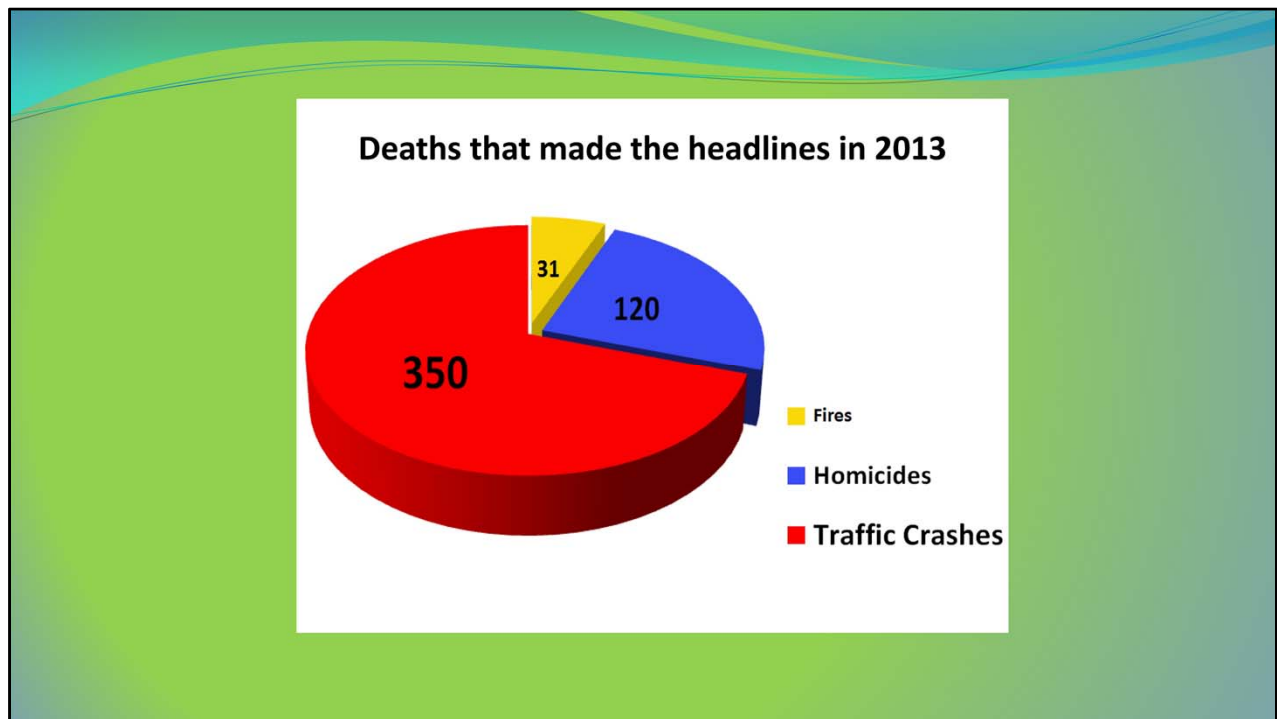


As SAFE has grown, the trend of unbelted fatalities in Kansas has continued to decrease. Not one fatality came from a SAFE county this year.

According to the Kansas Occupant Protection Observational Survey, for the second consecutive year, “seatbelt use among ages 15-17 is increasing at a faster rate than any other youth age group.” it is easy to conclude SAFE continues to influence the seatbelt usage rate of teens in Kansas. In other words, **SAFE works.**



Our current major funders are KDOT, KDHE, AAA, Kansas Trauma Program, State Farm and many local funders including several diversion fund programs. We have added this year the Kansas Sheriff's Association. The SAFE program is dependent on applying and receiving grants and fundraising by the students. It fluctuates each year.



80 % of Kansas counties experienced a fatal crash. The question is how can we reduce these numbers and have an impact on our communities.

It's not just about teens...

- **The 2008/2009 seatbelt survey result in Crawford County was 54%.**
- **The 2009/2010 seatbelt survey result was 77%. This is an increase of 23% and included the age group of 0-17 years old.**
- **The current rate is 83%. This is a 65 % increase since SAFE started.**
- **The age group of 10-14 year olds increased by 36%.**
- **5-9 year olds increased by 21%.**

For two years running the 15 to 17 teens are buckling up at a higher rate than the 10 to 14 (that is unheard of) the lower the age group the higher the use rate.

What this does not show is that in 2012, Crawford County experienced 53 roll over crashes. Out of those only 6 received disabling injuries and no fatalities. They have been involved in SAFE for 6 years.

No Seatbelt



We showed this picture earlier This vehicle was driven by a 16 year old no belts, no exposure to SAFE. The result was ejection and death.

Seatbelt



Compare that crash with one that occurred in Crawford County, two different results. Both live zones are intact. One buckled up, one not, one ejected one not, one exposed to SAFE one not. We know that not all crashes are survivable, some are so horrendous that a 5 point harness would allow you to survive, but we can save everyone that we can. We need to expose our youth to SAFE and the importance of all children wearing a seat belt or riding in a car seat. We can only do that if funding is available. We also think that if the fine is increased and part of that increase goes to SAFE we cannot only save lives' -we can change the culture for the future

seatbelt vs. no seatbelt



The young teen in the white car is not with us today and the young lady in the picture is one of those that survived and will be an asset to this State for many years to come.

Increasing the fine provides

- the opportunity to become a partner with the traffic safety community and
- educate and influence a cultural change
- assist with reducing deaths and injuries of those Kansans

This bill provides the opportunity for the legislature to become a partner with the traffic safety community – and use \$40 of the additional fine money to help statewide seat belt education efforts already in place on a partial scale to effect a cultural change over time so that we have seat belt use as the norm, and non-seat belt use as the rare exception.

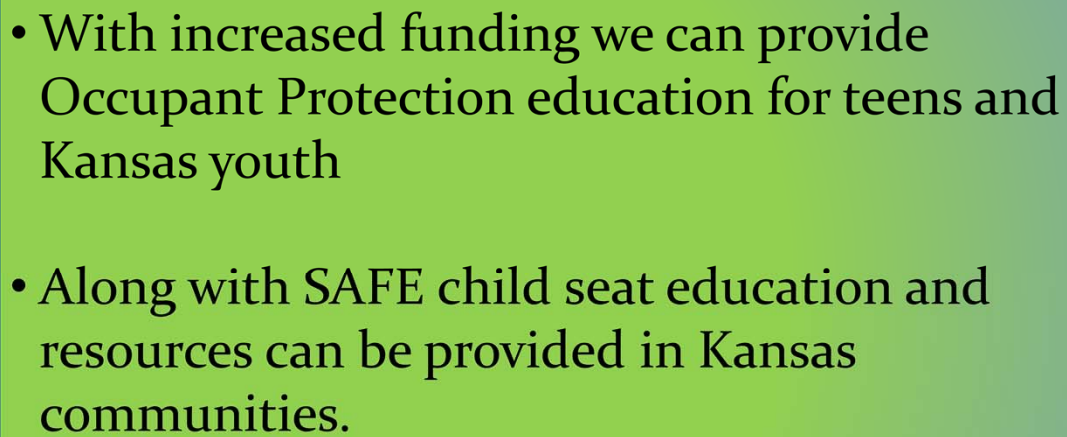


Fines and court costs do not cost
Kansas Taxpayers one cent!

Fines are paid by those who chose to
violate Kansas law.

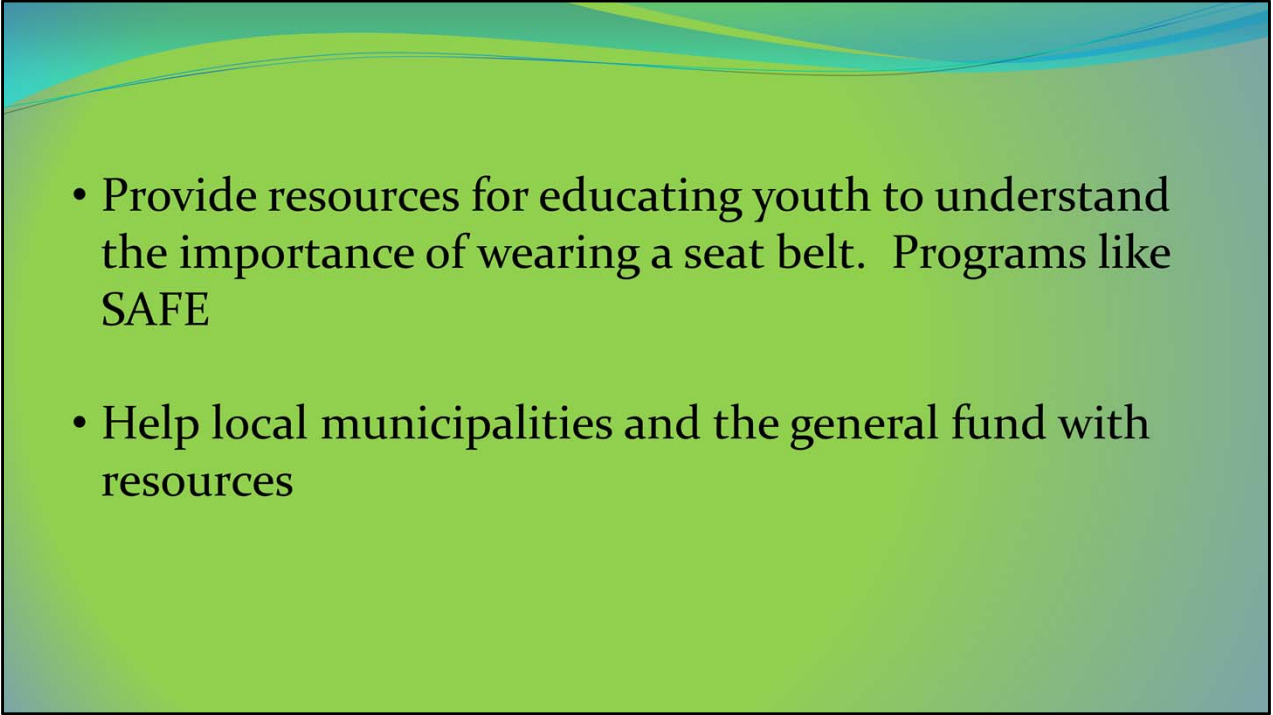
Furthermore, remember...fines not only alter behavior – they don't cost taxpayers anything

Fines are paid only by those who abuse the law –who choose to violate Kansas law.

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- With increased funding we can provide Occupant Protection education for teens and Kansas youth
 - Along with SAFE child seat education and resources can be provided in Kansas communities.

Our concept here is NOT about ENFORCEMENT – that will happen naturally. the proposal is about –EDUCATION...

It will close funding and education gaps in traffic safety that will take behavioral change to another level through education.

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- Provide resources for educating youth to understand the importance of wearing a seat belt. Programs like SAFE
 - Help local municipalities and the general fund with resources

We can take a portion of this fine and assure that every teen in every high school across Kansas has access to SAFE. Right now, the program is highly successful in changing behaviors of young people – even spilling to adults in their communities, but it is only in about third of our schools and the funding relies on the good graces of temporary sources.

Stable SAFE funding would provide access to the SAFE program for all middle and high schools in Kansas.

The Future for Occupant Protection in Kansas:

**Win Win
Win**

Law is simplified for enforcement
Legislators become educators and participate in
a cultural change
Lives are saved

It's simply a WIN – WIN – Win for everyone.

It's fair – It's simple

People understand the law and the fair consequences change behavior

The Culture changes over time...

..and the biggie: Lives are saved

To conclude, we would like you to consider bill__82__ for passage this session.