

February 10, 2015

Hilary Gee, Director of Health Policy
Kansas Action for Children

Testimony for House Transportation Hearing on HB 2157

Chairman Proehl and Members of the Committee:

Kansas Action for Children is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to shaping health, education and economic policy that improves the lives of Kansas children and families. On behalf of the children of Kansas, we stand in support of HB 2157. For more than a decade, Kansas Action for Children spearheaded efforts to improve child passenger safety in Kansas by advancing booster seat legislation, graduated drivers licensing implementation and primary enforcement of teen seat belt usage.

Seat belts save lives.

Most deaths and serious injuries from car accidents occur when occupants are not wearing seat belts. In 2012, the rate of teen deaths from motor vehicle accidents was 18 per 100,000 – this number accounts for half of teen violent deaths reported in the Kansas KIDS COUNT report. Wearing a seat belt is the best step Kansans can take to prevent deaths or serious injury in cars.

SAFE is a Kansas-focused solution.

Seatbelts Are for Everyone (SAFE) is a student-led education program that has been proven to consistently increase seat belt use and reduce fatalities. The program also improves communication between communities and local law enforcement.

Uniform fines will expand SAFE to more students.

Currently, SAFE is not available in all Kansas schools. But by making fines for seat belt violations uniform, this program can reach every school district in the state. Additionally, the increased fine will encourage more drivers to protect themselves by consistently wearing seat belts.

For these reasons, we respectfully request that committee members act to save lives and prevent injuries by supporting HB 2157.



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