



Testimony in favor of House Bill 2076

Chairman Peterson and Members of Senate Committee on Transportation:

My name is Teresa Taylor. I appreciate the opportunity to address this committee.

I am a Registered Nurse and I worked in the Emergency Department for many years. I am here representing the Kansas Emergency Nurses Association (KENA), the Kansas State Nurses Association (KSNA) and as a member of Safe Kids Kansas coalition. The approximate 1500 members from those organizations would like to add their support to this important piece of legislation, funding the Seatbelts Are For Everyone (SAFE) program. We believe increasing the fine for lack of seatbelt use is also a measure for public health.

Unfortunately, nurses from across the state have seen the devastating injuries and even death that is associated with teens involved in motor vehicle crashes. We believe these injuries could be significantly reduced if teens understood the importance of wearing seatbelts. We appreciated the enactment of the Graduated Driver License legislation and the resultant decrease in teen deaths. We are also extremely grateful of the Kansas House of Representatives favorable vote for HB 2076, as it is consistent with the same injury prevention focus. Perhaps, if wearing a seatbelt becomes a consistent behavior in teenage years, that behavior will continue it as they grow older.

There is Kansas specific evidence to show that the SAFE Program improves seatbelt use through a cooperative effort from the Kansas Traffic Safety Resource Office, law enforcement and high school students themselves. This nationally recognized program has changed the culture in approximately 150 high schools and their communities. By assuring funding on a consistent basis, the program will be able to sustain and expand to more schools.

Care that even the most educated and dedicated nurses give, does not compare to the benefit of a teen not being injured. One of the most difficult tasks we have is seeing serious injury and even death that could have been prevented.

Thank you for opportunity to speak, I would be happy to answer any questions.

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