

Testimony in Support of HB 2680

February 14, 2024

Chair Francis and the Kansas House Committee on Transportation,

On behalf of the Kansas Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (KAAP) and pediatricians throughout Kansas, we are writing to express KAAP's support for HB 2680, a measure designed to offset the dangerous risks that occur when a child is left alone in a motor vehicle. This bill provides an opportunity to protect the children of Kansas.

Since 2010, our state has tragically lost 15 children because they were left alone in hot cars.¹ Heat stroke is the most common non-collision cause of death in cars for children under the age of 15 years. The temperature inside a car can increase by 20 degrees Fahrenheit in as little as 10 minutes, leading to young children experiencing dangerous core body temperatures rapidly.² Numerous other incidents have resulted in additional serious injuries, hospitalizations, and deaths, including seat belt strangulation, carbon monoxide poisoning, and theft of the automobile while the child remains in a restraint device. A child left alone in a car is exposed to multiple risks, underscoring the need for immediate action to address this safety concern.

HB 2680 proposes an important preventive measure to any of those risks; it prohibits leaving a child 8 years of age or younger in a vehicle without the supervision of an individual who is 12 years of age or older. Additionally, the bill includes a \$100 penalty for any violations. By enacting such measures, HB 2680 raises awareness and deters parents and caregivers from dangerously leaving young children alone in vehicles. Child passenger restraint laws utilize a similar approach of incorporating awareness and deterrence, and these have been incredibly effective in reducing rates of serious childhood injuries and deaths due to motor vehicle collisions.

With 21 states already having enacted legislation like HB 2680, the time has come for Kansas to protect its most vulnerable and valuable resource, our children. Information related to this issue can be found at the American Academy of Pediatrics website for parents:

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/on-the-go/Pages/Prevent-Child-Deaths-in-Hot-Cars.aspx> . Additional resources are provided by the Kids and Cars Safety organization at the following link: <https://www.kidsandcars.org/laws/unattended-children-in-vehicle> .

KAAP believes that the enactment of HB 2680 will save Kansas children from serious injury and death. On behalf of the pediatricians of our state, we ask for your support of HB 2680.

Respectfully submitted,

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Member, KAAP Board of Directors

Dena Hubbard, MD, FAAP
Chair, KAAP Public Policy Committee


1. "Kids and Car Safety's Nontraffic Data Collection, Research and Analysis." Kids and Car Safety, last accessed 2/11/2024. <https://www.kidsandcars.org/statistics>
2. "Prevent Child Deaths in Hot Cars." American Academy of Pediatrics, last updated 8/3/2020, last accessed 2/11/2024. <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/on-the-go/Pages/Prevent-Child-Deaths-in-Hot-Cars.aspx>

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