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Sponsor Statement

House Bill 95 –27th Legislature

House Bill 95 redefines the violation of failing to wear a seat belt, while driving, from a primary offense to a secondary offense.

This means that while wearing a seat belt remains state law, an officer may not use lack of seat belt use as an exclusive reason for pulling over a vehicle.

The secondary offense law was the *status quo* in Alaska for fifteen years.

HB 95 acknowledges that:

- Seat belt use is important and increased use, across the population, can be attained through other means.
- Police officer time and energy are important and, therefore, should be focused on substantive enforcement activity;
- The public is best served when Public Safety is concerned with caliber of driving instead of components that do not affect driving ability;
- Seatbelts, while a component of responsible driving, do not prevent accidents;
- The primary offense law is a violation of privacy; being pulled over for apparently failing to wear a seatbelt is an authority easily abused. It can be used as an excuse to stop a driver for any number of unrelated reasons.

As a way of respecting Alaskans' right to privacy, expectation to be treated as adults, and efficient use of law enforcement time and resources, HB 95 should be enacted.

I appreciate the committee's consideration for this bill and request your support.