

HB

167

FISCAL NOTE

REQUEST:

Revision Date: _____
Title: "An act relating to mandatory use of safety devices."
Sponsor: Cotten, Ulmer, Koponen, ...
Requestor: Senate State Affairs

Agency Affected: PUBLIC SAFETY
BRU: Highway Safety Planning Agency

Components: _____

EXPENDITURES/REVENUES: (Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING	FY 88	FY 89	FY 90	FY 91	FY 92	FY 93
PERSONAL SERVICES						
TRAVEL						
CONTRACTUAL						
SUPPLIES						
EQUIPMENT						
LAND & STRUCTURES						
GRANTS, CLAIMS						
MISCELLANEOUS						
TOTAL OPERATING	0	0	0	0	0	0

CAPITAL						
---------	--	--	--	--	--	--

REVENUE						
---------	--	--	--	--	--	--

FUNDING: (Thousands of Dollars)

GENERAL FUND	0	0	0	0	0	0
FEDERAL FUNDS						
OTHER						
TOTAL	0	0	0	0	0	0

POSITIONS:

FULL-TIME						
PART-TIME						
TEMPORARY						

ANALYSIS : (Attach a separate page if necessary)

No fiscal impact is anticipated. Revenue generated will be negligible.

Prepared by: Ellen Moore, Program Coordinator
Division: Highway Safety Planning Agency

Phone: 465-4375
Date: January 28, 1988

Approved by Commissioner: George H. Wootcher, Dep. Comm.
Agency: Department of Public Safety

Date: 1-28-88

Distribution (by preparer):

- Legislative Finance
- Legislative Sponsor
- Requestor
- Office of Management and Budget
- Impacted Agency(ies)

ALASKA SAFETY BELT USE COALITION

319 SEWARD ST. #8
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99801
907-586-1400

6/25/87

REPRESENTATIVE FRAN ULMER
1700 ANGUS WAY
JUNEAU, AK 99801

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE ULMER,


ON BEHALF OF THE COALITION, I WOULD LIKE TO THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT OF CSHB 167 (JUD) AM. THANKS TO YOUR HARD WORK A SAFETY BELT USE LAW IS ONE STEP CLOSER TO BECOMING REALITY.

YOUR PERSUASIVE EFFORTS, ENTHUSIASM AND INVOLVEMENT IN THE SAFETY BELT USE ISSUE, RESULTED IN PASSAGE OF THE BILL IN THE HOUSE AND HAS HELPED SPREAD THE WORD OF THE BENEFITS OF SAFETY BELT USE.

ENCLOSED IS A PLAQUE EXPRESSING THANKS FROM THE COALITION MEMBERSHIP OF OVER 8,000 STATEWIDE.

AGAIN, THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT.

SINCERELY,


FRANK BUCKFORD
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

P.S. NEVADA BECAME THE 28TH STATE TO PASS A SAFETY BELT USE LAW LAST WEEK.



Final

RSN: 334

ALASKA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
CSHB 167(JUD)AM RECON

1ST SESSION 15TH LEG

5/ 4/87 12:37 PM

		22	YEAS	16	NAYS	2	EXC	0	ABS		
N	ADAMS ✓	Y			DONLEY	Y			HUDSON	Y	POURCHOT
N	BARNES ✓	Y			ELLIS	Y			KOPONEN	Y	RIEGER
N	BOUCHER ✓	N			FRANK	Y *			LARSON	N	SHULTZ
N	BOYER	E			FURNACE	Y			MARTIN	N	SPRINGER
Y	BROWN	N			GOLL	Y			MENARD	Y	SUND
N	CATO	Y			GRUENBERG	N			MILLER	Y	SWACKHAMMER
Y	COLLINS ✓	N			GRUSSENDORF	Y			NAVARRE	N *	TAYLOR
Y	COTTEN ✓	Y			HANLEY	E			PEARCE	Y	ULMER
Y	DAVIDSON ✓	N			HERRMANN	N			PETTYJOHN	N	WALLIS
Y	DAVIS ✓	N			HOFFMAN	Y			PHILLIPS	Y	ZAWACKI

+ VOTED FOR
* CHANGED VOTE

?

PUBLIC OPINION MESSAGE

DEAR: REPRESENTATIVE ULMER

NAME: ROBERT MARTIN

TITLE:

ADDRESS: P.O. BOX 34301

CITY: JUNEAU

ZIP: 99803

PHONE: 789-2131

BILL NO: HB 167

SUBJECT: MANDATORY SEAT BELTS

MESSAGE: I WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR SUPPORT FOR HB 167, IT HAS BEEN PROVEN TO DRAMATICALLY SAVE LIVES IN OTHER STATES WITH SIMILAR LAWS. THANK YOU.

POHID: 00085956

DATE: 04/15/87

TIME: 08:59:56

LIONAME: JUNEAU LIO

COPIES: REPRESENTATIVES REPRESENTATIVES SENATORS

ADAMS
BOUCHER
BROWN
COLLINS
DAVIDSON
DONLEY
FRANK
GOLL
GRUSSENDORF
HERRMANN
HUDSON
LARSON
HENARD
NAVARRE
PETTYJOHN
POURCHOT
SHULTZ
SUND
TAYLOR
ZAWACKI

BARNES
BOYER
CATO
COTTEN
DAVIS
ELLIS
FURNACE
GRUENBERG
HANLEY
HOFFMAN
KOPONEN
MARTIN
MILLER
PEARCE
PHILLIPS
RIEGER
SPRINGER
SWACKHAMMER
WALLIS

ABOOD
BENNETT
BINKLEY
COGHILL
DUNCAN
ELIASON
FAHRENKAMP
FAIKS
FISCHER
HALFORD
HENSLEY
JONES
JOSEPHSON
KELLY
KERTTULA
RODEY
STURGULEWSKI
SZYMANSKI
UEHLING
ZHAROFF

NO RESPONSE REQUIRED

PUBLIC OPINION MESSAGE

DEAR: REPRESENTATIVE ULMER

NAME: ANNA THOMPSON
TITLE:
ADDRESS: 9499 BRAYTON, SPACE 201
CITY: ANCHORAGE
PHONE: 344-9338
BILL NO: HB 167
SUBJECT: MANDATORY SEAT BELTS
MESSAGE: I AM IN SUPPORT OF HB 167.

ZIP: 99507

POMID: 03105833
DATE: 04/07/87
TIME: 10:58:33
LIONAME: ANCHORAGE LIO

COPIES: REPRESENTATIVES REPRESENTATIVES

ADAMS	BARNES
BOUCHER	BOYER
BROWN	CATO
COLLINS	COTTEN
DAVIDSON	DAVIS
DONLEY	ELLIS
FRANK	FURNACE
GOLL	GRUENBERG
GRUSSENDORF	HANLEY
HERRMANN	HOFFMAN
HUDSON	KOPONEN
LARSON	MARTIN
MENARD	MILLER
NAVARRE	PEARCE
PETTYJOHN	PHILLIPS
POURCHOT	RIEGER
SHULTZ	SPRINGER
SUND	SWACKHAMMER
TAYLOR	WALLIS
ZAWACKI	

PUBLIC OPINION MESSAGE

DEAR: REPRESENTATIVE ULMER

NAME: LORI LANDSTROM

TITLE:

ADDRESS: BOX 3998

CITY: SOLDOTNA

ZIP: 99669

PHONE: N/A-

BILL NO: HB 167

SUBJECT: SEAT BELTS

MESSAGE: I URGE YOU TO PASS HB167. I STRONGLY SUPPORT THIS BILL. AS A VOLUNTEER
AMBULANCE PERSONNEL I'VE SEEN PEOPLE WHO TOTAL THEIR VEHICLE BUT BECAUSE THEY
HAD THEIR SEAT BELT ON, WALK AWAY WITHOUT A SCRATCH. THANK YOU.

POMID: 13121336

DATE: 04/07/87

TIME: 12:13:36

LIONAME: SOLDOTNA LIO

COPIES: REPRESENTATIVES SENATOR

NAVARRE
SWACKHAMMER
BARNES
COTTEN
GRUENBERG
SUND
TAYLOR

FISCHER

PUBLIC OPINION MESSAGE

DEAR: REPRESENTATIVE ULMER

NAME: DONALD S. ALSPACH
TITLE:
ADDRESS: 2101 DAWNLIGHT COURT
CITY: ANCHORAGE ZIP: 99501
PHONE: 274-9103
BILL NO: HB 167
SUBJECT: MANDATORY SEAT BELTS
MESSAGE: MY FAMILY AND URGE THE PASSAGE OF A MANDATORY AUTOMOBILE SAFETY BELT LAW. SUCH A LAW WOULD SAVE MANY LIVES THAT WOULD BE LOST BY PERSONS TO IGNORANT TO WEAR THE SAFETY BELTS WITHOUT BEING FORCED.

POMID: 03132531
DATE: 04/07/87
TIME: 13:25:31
LIONAME: ANCHORAGE LIO

COPIES: REPRESENTATIVES REPRESENTATIVES

ADAMS	BARNES
BOUCHER	BOYER
BROWN	CATO
COLLINS	COTTEN
DAVIDSON	DAVIS
DONLEY	ELLIS
FRANK	FURNACE
GOLL	GRUENBERG
GRUSSENDORF	HANLEY
HERRMANN	HOFFMAN
HUDSON	KOPONEN
LARSON	MARTIN
MENARD	MILLER
NAVARRE	PEARCE
PETTYJOHN	PHILLIPS
POURCHOT	RIEGER
SHULTZ	SPRINGER
SUND	SHACKHAMMER
TAYLOR	WALLIS
ZAWACKI	

NO RESPONSE REQUIRED

A M E N D M E N T

Offered in the HOUSE

By Cotten

TO: HB 167

Page 2, after line 6, insert a new subsection to read:

"(e) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a peace officer may not stop or detain a person to determine compliance with (a) or (b) of this section, or issue a citation for a violation of (a) or (b) of this section, unless the peace officer has probable cause to stop or detain the person other than for a violation of (a) or (b) of this section."

HOUSE COMMITTEE REPORT

(7)

Date referred: 3/6/87

FURTHER REFERRALS: Judiciary

DATE: 3-20-87

The State Affairs Committee has considered HB 167

"An Act relating to mandatory use of safety devices."

RECOMMENDS:

- replace with CS HB 167(SA) the same title
- attached amendment(s) a new title
- do pass
- do not pass
- no recommendation
- individual recommendations
- additional referral to the _____ Committee

ADOPTS: _____ letter of intent

ATTACHES NEW FISCAL NOTE(s):

- fiscal impact same as previous fiscal note published _____
- zero fiscal note same as previous zero fiscal note published _____
- zero with analysis

SIGNING DO PASS:

[Signature]

Cliff Davidson

Dave Douby

Carol [Signature]

SIGNING OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS:

Terry [Signature] - No Rec.

[Signature]
Chairman's signature



Official Business

Alaska State Legislature

House

P.O. BOX V
State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99811

COMMITTEE ON STATE AFFAIRS

March 31, 1987

Jim Preston
8501 Jennifer Drive
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Jim:

Thank you for your Public Opinion Message (POM) on seat belts. You will be interested to know that HB 167 passed from the State Affairs Committee on March 20 and is now in the House Judiciary Committee.

By the way, congratulations on your outstanding performances in another Juneau Lyric Opera success. I wish I could have had the time to be a part of it.

Thanks, again, for your POM. It's always nice to hear from someone I know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Fran Ulmer".

Fran Ulmer, Chair
State Affairs Committee

PUBLIC OPINION MESSAGE

DEAR: REPRESENTATIVE ULMER

NAME: JIM PRESTON
TITLE: TEACHER
ADDRESS: 8501 JENNIFER DRIVE
CITY: JUNEAU
PHONE: 789-0088

ZIP: 99801

BILL NO: HB 167

SUBJECT: MANDATORY SEAT BELTS

MESSAGE: I AM IN FAVOR OF THE MANDATORY SEAT BELT LAW. I KNOW THAT A SEAT BELT HAS SAVED MY LIFE, AND IN STATES WHERE THEY HAVE MANDATORY SEAT BELT LAWS, THE NUMBER OF FATALITIES DECREASE.

POMID: 00145300
DATE: 03/25/87
TIME: 14:53:00
LIONAME: JUNEAU LIO

COPIES: REPRESENTATIVE SENATOR

HUDSON

DUNCAN

*Seat belt
file*

Original sponsors: Cotten, Ulmer,
Koponen, et al.

1 IN THE HOUSE

BY THE STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

2 CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 167 (State Affairs)

3 IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

4 FIFTEENTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

5 A BILL

6 For an Act entitled: "An Act relating to mandatory use of safety devices."

7 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

8 * Section 1. AS 28.05.095 is repealed and reenacted to read:

9 Sec. 28.05.095. USE OF SAFETY DEVICES REQUIRED. (a) Except as
10 provided in (c) of this section, a person may not occupy a motor
11 vehicle while in operation unless restrained by a safety belt.

12 (b) Except as provided in (c) of this section, a driver may not
13 transport a child under the age of seven in a motor vehicle unless the
14 driver has provided and properly secured each child as described in
15 this subsection. If the child is less than four years of age, the
16 child shall be properly secured in a child safety device meeting the
17 standards of the United States Department of Transportation for a
18 child safety device for infants. If the child is between four and six
19 years of age, the child shall be properly secured in a child safety
20 device approved for a child of that age and size by the United States
21 Department of Transportation or in a seatbelt, whichever is appropri-
22 ate for the particular child.

23 (c) Subsections (a) and (b) do not apply to

24 (1) passengers in a school bus or an emergency vehicle;

25 (2) a vehicle operator acting in the course of employment
26 delivering mail or newspapers from inside the vehicle to roadside mail
27 or newspaper boxes;

28 (3) a person or class of persons exempted by regulation
29 under AS 28.05.096;

1 (4) a person required to be restrained by seatbelts under
2 (a) or (b) of this section if the motor vehicle is not equipped with
3 seatbelts; or

4 (5) a motor vehicle exempt under AS 28.10.011(11).

5 (d) A person may not remove a seatbelt from a vehicle solely to
6 be exempted under (c)(4) of this section.

7 (e) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a peace officer
8 may not stop or detain a person to determine compliance with (a) or
9 (b) of this section, or issue a citation for a violation of (a) or (b)
10 of this section, unless the peace officer has probable cause to stop
11 or detain the person other than for a violation of (a) or (b) of this
12 section.

13 * Sec. 2. AS 28.05.096(a) is amended to read:

14 (a) The commissioner of public safety may adopt regulations to
15 exempt a person [CHILD] or a class of persons [CHILDREN] from the
16 requirements of AS 28.05.095 if the commissioner determines that the
17 use of a [CHILD] safety device is impractical because of physical or
18 medical conditions of the person or class of persons [CHILD].

19 * Sec. 3. AS 28.05.099 is amended to read:

20 Sec. 28.05.099. PENALTY. (a) A person convicted of a violation
21 of AS 28.05.095(a), (b), or (d) [(c)] is guilty of an infraction and
22 may be finned up to \$15. In addition to the fine established under
23 this section, a person convicted of a violation of AS 28.05.095(b) may
24 be assessed demerit points as determined by regulations of the depart-
25 ment, notwithstanding the provisions of AS 28.15.231(b).

26 (b) A person who violates AS 28.05.095(b) [AS 28.05.095(a)] by
27 failing to provide a child safety device or seatbelt may provide a
28 peace officer, including a village safety officer, proof of purchase
29 or acquisition, and installation, of an approved child safety device

1 or seatbelt. If the proof is provided within 30 days after the issu-
2 ance of a citation for the infraction, the court shall dismiss the
3 citation and no points shall be assessed under (a) of this section
4 unless the person has

5 (1) been convicted previously for violating that section by
6 failing to provide a child safety device or seatbelt;

7 (2) been cited for failure to provide a child safety device
8 or seatbelt and has forfeited the bail required by the citation; or

9 (3) provided the proof required by this subsection on a
10 prior occasion.
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STATE OF ALASKA 1987 LEGISLATIVE SESSION
FISCAL NOTE

Bill Version: CSHB 167 (SA)

Publish Date: _____

REQUEST

Revision Date: _____

Title: "An Act relating to mandatory use of safety devices."

Sponsor: Cotten, Ulmer, Koponen, ...

Requestor: House Judiciary

Agency Affected: PUBLIC SAFETY

BRU: Highway Safety Planning Agency

Components: _____

EXPENDITURES/REVENUES: (Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING	FY 87	FY 88	FY 89	FY 90	FY 91	FY 92
PERSONAL SERVICES						
TRAVEL						
CONTRACTUAL						
SUPPLIES						
EQUIPMENT						
LAND & STRUCTURES						
GRANTS, CLAIMS						
MISCELLANEOUS						
TOTAL OPERATING		0	0	0	0	0
CAPITAL						
REVENUE						

FUNDING:: (Thousands of Dollars)

GENERAL FUNDS		0	0	0	0	0
FEDERAL FUNDS						
OTHER						
TOTAL		0	0	0	0	0

POSITIONS:

FULL-TIME						
PART-TIME						
TEMPORARY						

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

No fiscal impact is anticipated. Amendment reduces the maximum fine for violation of the child restraint law from \$300 to \$15 and changes it from primary to secondary enforcement. This negative revenue impact will be offset by fines collected for violation of the adult use provision.

Prepared by: Ellen Moore, Program Coordinatory Phone: 465-4375

Division: Highway Safety Planning Agency Date: 3/23/87

Approved by Commissioner: *[Signature]* Date: 3/23/87

Agency: Public Safety

Distribution (by preparer):

- Legislative Finance
- Legislative Sponsor
- Requestor
- Office of Management and Budget
- Impacted Agency(ies)
- Senate Secretary



Official Business

Alaska State Legislature

House

P.O. BOX V
State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99811

STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

HOUSE BILL 167

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2. ALASKA SAFETY BELT USE COALITION LEGISLATIVE UPDATE, 3/13/87
3. GENERAL INFORMATION
4. ALASKA SAFETY BELT USE COALITION LEGISLATIVE UPDATE, 3/11/87
5. LETTER FROM HERBERT EVERETT TO REPRESENTATIVE ULMER, DATED 3/9/87
6. LETTER FROM JOE HAYES TO REPRESENTATIVE ULMER, DATED 3/11/87
7. POSITION PAPER, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
8. POSITION PAPER, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

FISCAL NOTE

- A. DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY, HIGHWAY SAFETY PLANNING: EXPENDITURES = 0; REVENUES = \$15,000
- B. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES, PUBLIC HEALTH ADMINISTRATION SERVICES - EMS: -0-



Official Business

Alaska State Legislature

House

P.O. BOX V
State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99811

COMMITTEE ON STATE AFFAIRS

March 30, 1987

Julia Carlton
c/o Juneau-Douglas High School
10014 Crazy Horse Drive
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Julia:

Thank you for participating in the Close-Up program and testifying before the House State Affairs Committee on House Bill 167, relating to mandatory use of seat belts. You chose a very worthwhile bill to support and I am happy you were able to see it successfully passed from our committee.

I am enclosing a photocopy of the newspaper article which appeared in the Juneau Empire in case you need an extra.

Thanks, again, for taking the time to care.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Fran Ulmer".

Fran Ulmer, Chair
House State Affairs Committee

Enclosure
HB 167



Official Business

Alaska State Legislature

House

P.O. BOX V
State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99811

COMMITTEE ON STATE AFFAIRS

March 30, 1987

Shannon Sexton
c/o Juneau-Douglas High School
10014 Crazy Horse Drive
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Shannon:

Thank you for participating in the Close-Up program and testifying before the House State Affairs Committee on House Bill 167, relating to mandatory use of seat belts. You chose a very worthwhile bill to support and I am happy you were able to see it successfully passed from our committee.

I am enclosing a photocopy of the newspaper article which appeared in the Juneau Empire in case you need an extra.

Thanks, again, for taking the time to care.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Fran".

Fran Ulmer, Chair
House State Affairs Committee

Enclosure
HB 167

DATE

TO: Rep. Fran Ulmer

FR: Reed Reynolds - Southeast Regional EMS Council

SENT BY SITKA, ALASKA LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION OFFICE.

NUMBER OF PAGES INCLUDING THIS ONE: 2

PLEASE NOTE THAT WE HAVE A RAPICOM 230 AUTOMATIC TELECOPIER; THIS MACHINE CANNOT TRANSMIT PAGES LARGER THAN 8 1/2" x 14". OUR TELECOPIER DIRECT LINE IS (907) 747-5807.

PLEASE TELEPHONE IMMEDIATELY IF ANY PAGES ARE RECEIVED IMPROPERLY: (907) 747-6277.

BILLED TO: _____

RESOLUTION

SOUTHEAST ALASKA EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

- WHEREAS: Trauma is the leading cause of death in Alaska and fourth in the nation;
- WHEREAS: Motor vehicle crashes are the number one cause of death from unintentional traumatic injuries;
- WHEREAS: More than 40,000 people in the U.S. and more than 100 in Alaska die each year from motor vehicle crashes;
- WHEREAS: More than 6,000 people in Alaska are injured seriously in motor vehicle crashes each year;
- WHEREAS: Seatbelts have been proven effective in reducing both deaths and serious injuries; and mandatory seatbelt use laws have been proven effective in increasing the use of seatbelts; and
- WHEREAS: The primary goal of Emergency Medical Services is to save lives;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That the Emergency Medical Services providers of Southeast Alaska support the passage of a mandatory seatbelt use law for Alaska,

and be it further resolved that this legislation be amended to require seatbelts on school buses and all public conveyances.

Moved seconded & passed

3/20/87

Reed Reynolds

At the 3rd Annual Southeast EMS Symposium with 150 persons attending.

Position Paper 12
3/87

FEDERAL STANDARD 208

ISSUE: Are your efforts to pass safety-belt-use laws aimed at rescinding Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard 208 (FMVSS 208), making passive restraints -- most notably, air bags -- mandatory in all new automobiles on a phased-in basis?

POSITION: No. Our goal is to save lives and prevent serious injuries by having motorists use the safety belts which already exist in their automobiles. Experience in many of our states, and throughout the world, proves high safety-belt usage can only be attained through safety-belt-use laws.

Safety-belt laws are necessary because automatic safety belts can be detached. For full protection -- even in cars equipped with air bags -- vehicle occupants should wear their safety belts.

Automobile manufacturers already are -- or planning to -- install and market air bags as supplemental protection in new cars. Those bags will be helpful in frontal collisions, but of no value in the event of rollovers, multiple-impact accidents and side-on or rear-on crashes. Safety belts offer protection in all types of accidents.

Even if air bags were made mandatory, it would be well into the 21st century before they would be available in all automobiles. During the time it will take to phase air bags in, U. S. Department of Transportation figures show that tens of thousands of lives could be saved, and millions of serious injuries prevented, if everyone used the safety belts available in all cars today.

As automobile manufacturers proceed to comply with the provisions of FMVSS 208, safety-belt-use laws still are necessary to obtain the highest level of protection in our automobiles.

BACKGROUND: Automobile manufacturers are complying with FMVSS 208, requiring automatic restraints be phased in on 10 percent of all 1987 models; 25 percent of 1988 models; 40 percent of 1989 models; and 100 percent of 1990 models. When U. S. Department of Transportation Secretary Elizabeth H. Dole issued FMVSS 208 on July 11, 1984, she offered to rescind it if two-thirds of the population is covered by safety-belt-use laws by April 1, 1989, and if those laws covered all front-seat passengers, contained waivers only for medical reasons, included at least a \$25 fine, allowed the violator to be used in mitigation of damages, provided for an educational program aimed at compliance, and had an effective date of no later than September of 1989. Nearly 70 percent of the U. S. population is now covered by belt laws.

ISSUED: March 10, 1987

AIR BAGS

ISSUE: How does your organization feel about air bags?

POSITION: Air bags are only effective in frontal collisions, which represent about one-half of all automobile accidents. Safety belts provide protection in all types of accidents, offering more overall security than air bags.

Even if air bags were made mandatory, it would be well into the 21st century before they would be available in all automobiles. Tens of thousands of lives can be saved and millions of injuries prevented over the next 20 years if people will use the safety belts which are available in all cars now.

BACKGROUND: Air bags in automobiles are very useful supplementary safety devices, but an occupant in an air-bag-equipped car still should wear a safety belt, because of the air bag's limited utility.

Air bags are inflated only by relatively severe frontal impacts and offer little or no protection in the event of rollovers, multiple-impact accidents, side-on or rear-on crashes.

If air bags were required in all new cars, every automobile on the road could not possibly be equipped with them for another 15 to 20 years. U. S. Department of Transportation figures show tens of thousands of lives could be saved, and millions of injuries prevented, by using the safety belts available in all cars today.

All the evidence shows that the only way to get substantial and dramatic increases in safety-belt use is through safety-belt-use laws.

ISSUED: March 10, 1987

A M E N D M E N T

Offered in the HOUSE

By Cotten

TO: HB 167

Page 2, after line 6, insert a new subsection to read:

"(e) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a peace officer may not stop or detain a person to determine compliance with (a) or (b) of this section, or issue a citation for a violation of (a) or (b) of this section, unless the peace officer has probable cause to stop or detain the person other than for a violation of (a) or (b) of this section."

ALASKA PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH SURVEY

Prepared For

ALASKA SAFETY BELT USE COALITION

January, 1987

By Hellenthal and Associates, Inc.

LAW REQUIRING SAFETY BELTS FOR ALL VEHICLE OCCUPANTS
BY
POLITICAL AND GENERAL DEMOGRAPHICS

		Are you for or against a safety belt law?	
Frequency		For	Against
STATE HOUSE DISTRICTS:			
1	19	83.2%	16.8%
2	12	72.4%	27.6%
3	102	65.7%	34.3%
4	28	68.7%	31.3%
5	19	49.8%	50.2%
6	6	35.7%	64.3%
7	42	52.6%	47.4%
8	109	60.5%	39.5%
9	91	67.3%	32.7%
10	126	70.2%	29.8%
11	88	58.9%	41.1%
12	85	68.6%	31.4%
13	86	59.1%	40.9%
14	96	68.9%	31.1%
15	98	65.1%	34.9%
16	106	69.4%	30.6%
17	19	74.3%	25.7%
18	41	53.0%	47.0%
19	19	73.3%	26.7%
20	69	46.1%	53.9%
21	51	61.8%	38.2%
22	9	65.3%	34.7%
23	8	77.5%	22.5%
24	9	76.9%	23.1%
25	9	100.0%	
26	10	68.2%	31.8%
27	116	65.7%	34.3%

Frequency	Are you for or against a safety belt law?	
	For	Against
AREAS OF ALASKA:		
Southeast	74.0%	26.0%
Sitka	65.7%	34.3%
Cordova-Kenai-S. Anc.	48.3%	51.7%
Anchorage	65.0%	35.0%
MatSu	69.4%	30.6%
Greater Fairbanks	56.8%	43.2%
Rural Alaska	77.7%	22.3%
Kodiak	65.7%	34.3%
TOTAL ROW PERCENT	65.1%	34.9%

STATE WIDE RESULTS

In total, 1473 Alaskan adults were interviewed between January 8th and 17th, 1987.

Question - Are you for or against a safety belt law?

Response - For : 65.1%, Against : 34.9%

Question - If Alaska passed a safety belt use law would you say that you would always wear a safety belt, would wear one most of the time, would sometimes wear one, would hardly ever wear one, or would never wear one?

Response - Always wear a safety belt : 62.1% , Wear safety belt most of the time : 22.6%, Sometimes wear a safety belt : 8.0%, Hardly ever wear a safety belt : 3.8%, Never wear a safety belt 3.5%.

Alaska Vehicle Occupant Fatality Figures, 1985 (last year for which figures are available):

According to the Alaska Highway Safety Planning Agency, in 1985 there were one hundred and twenty-seven traffic accident fatalities. Of the 127 people killed in Alaskan traffic accidents in 1985, 100 (79%) were drivers and passengers of cars. Ninety-four of the 100 people killed were not wearing seat belts.

March 9, 1987

SUBJECT: Safety Belt Use Law Effect Fact Sheet as Reported
by National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

Briefly, the NHTSA report highlights the following:

- Since December 1984 to September 1986, 1058 lives have been saved due to SBULs
- For the first six months of 1986 if the fatality changes in states without SBULs are used to estimate what would have happened in the use law states if they had not had use laws, then these data produce an estimate that SBULs were 11.5 percent effective in preventing fatalities.
- Safety belt use can reduce risk of serious or fatal injuries by 40 to 50 percent.
- Belt use in post law states averages about 45 percent.

SAFETY BELT USE LAWS FACT SHEET

January 1987

SAFETY BELT USE LAWS

In July 1984, New York State enacted the first safety belt use law in the U.S. Combined with Secretary Dole's initiative on automatic occupant protection, this began a wave of legislative action that resulted in the enactment of belt use laws in 26 States and the District of Columbia.

Each of these laws has as its goal the reduction in deaths and injuries in motor vehicle crashes. This fact sheet presents information on how effective these laws have been in achieving that goal.

The total life savings attributable to a safety belt use law are a function of both the effectiveness of safety belts in reducing fatalities and injuries and the degree to which motor vehicle occupants actually use their safety belts.

Field studies of a wide variety of motor vehicle crashes, both here and overseas, consistently indicate that, when used, safety belts can reduce the risk of fatal or serious injuries by between 40 and 50%. The degree of use varies in response to passage of a use law. While cases exist abroad where safety belt use levels in excess of 90% have been sustained, there are also instances where enactment of use laws has not been followed by any substantial increase in belt use. Currently, safety belt usage in States that have passed use laws averages about 45%. Usage varies widely, however. States with usage in excess of 70% are adjacent to States where usage does not exceed 40%.

This fact sheet presents an estimate of the number of lives that have been saved as a result of compliance with safety belt use laws. These estimates are obtained through the use of time series analyses as well as comparisons of motor vehicle front seat occupant fatalities occurring after the enactment of a law with those levels during similar periods prior to the law's enactment. The fact sheet also presents information on safety belt use law performance for 1985 and for the first six months of 1986.

ESTIMATES OF SAFETY BELT USE LAW PERFORMANCE

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's National Center for Statistics and Analysis has made estimates of the fatality reductions due to safety belt use laws. These estimates are based on information from the Fatal Accident Reporting System (FARS).

- o FARS contains information on the number of front seat passenger vehicle occupant fatalities.

- o These fatalities in States during the months in which the safety belt use law was in effect have been compared to fatalities during the same months in previous years when the law was not in effect. Additionally, front seat passenger vehicle occupant fatalities in States that did not have a safety belt use law in effect during any year have been compared so that a fatality trend can be established.
- o A percentage reduction in front seat passenger vehicle occupant fatalities can be calculated using this data.

LIVES SAVED DUE TO SAFETY BELT USE LAWS

By aggregating all the front seat passenger vehicle occupant fatalities that have occurred in States since their belt use laws became effective, it is possible to estimate the lives saved due to these laws.

- o Based on the data available, safety belt use law performance is estimated at 7%. That is, occupant fatalities in passenger vehicles have been reduced by 7% in States that passed use laws.
- o Passage of safety belt use laws will save lives. More importantly, once a law is passed, it will continue to save lives.
- o An estimate of the lives saved across the nation due to the passage of safety belt use laws since the first safety belt law became effective in New York in December of 1984 is presented below:

<u>Time Period</u>	<u>Lives Saved Due to Safety Belt Use Laws During this Period</u>	<u>Total Lives Saved Due to Safety Belt Use Laws</u>
December 1984	7	7
January '85 - June '85	49	56
July '85 - December '85	223	279
January '86 - September '86	779	1058

SAFETY BELT USE LAW PERFORMANCE IN 1985

In 1985, eight States had safety belt use laws in effect for at least 3 months. A minimum of 3 months is necessary to ensure that the effects of use laws can be assessed.

- o FARS data from these States were used to estimate the effects of safety belt use laws on front seat passenger vehicle occupant fatalities. NHTSA's estimate is that safety belt use laws resulted in a 7% reduction of these fatalities in 1985.

MANDATORY USE LAW PERFORMANCE IN 1986

As of December 1986, FARS has sufficient fatality counts for the first 6 months of 1986 to make estimates of safety belt use law effects on front seat passenger vehicle occupant fatalities.

- o Front seat passenger vehicle occupant fatalities decreased by an estimated 3% in States which did not have a safety belt use law in effect the first half of 1985 but had a law in effect for all the first half of 1986.
- o In contrast, fatalities in the front seats of passenger vehicles increased by an estimated 8% among States which had not implemented a safety belt use law by the end of the first half of 1986.
- o If the fatality changes in States without safety belt use laws are used to estimate what would have happened in the use law States if they had not had use laws, then these data produce an estimate that safety belt use laws were 11% effective in preventing fatalities.
- o Using time series analysis covering the cumulative time period from January '85 through September '86, safety belt use laws are estimated to have resulted in a 7% reduction in fatalities.
- o Based on all available data and analyses, mandatory use law performance is estimated at 7%.

MANDATORY USE LAW LEGISLATION

Beginning with New York in December 1984, Columbia have passed mandatory belt use la dates are presented below:

<u>State</u>	<u>Effective Date</u>	<u>S</u>	
New York	12/01/84	New	
New Jersey	3/01/85	Tem	
Illinois	7/01/85	Utah	
Michigan	7/01/85	Ohio	
Texas	9/01/85	Wash	
Nebraska*	9/06/85	Flor	
Missouri	9/28/85	Iowa	
North Carolina	11/01/85	Kans	
District of Columbia	12/12/85	Loui	
Hawaii	12/16/85	Idah	
California	1/01/86	Maryland	
Connecticut	1/01/86	Minnesota	
Massachusetts*	1/01/86	Oklahoma	
		Indiana	
			11/01/86
			7/01/86
			8/01/86
			2/01/87
			7/01/87

* As of 3/13/87
 25 States + D.C.
 have passed seat
 belt use laws.
 The new state added
 is VIRGINIA 2/17/87

*SAFETY BELT LAW WAS RESCINDED BY A 11/4/86 REFERENDUM VOTE

September 24, 1986

SUBJECT: Analysis of NTSB Study

Should Rear Seat Occupants Wear Lap Belts? - An Analysis of the NTSB study

On August 11 the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) held a press conference to report on a 'new study' with startling and disquieting news: that rear seat occupants of automobiles may have more serious injuries in crashes if they wear lap type seat belts than if they remain totally unrestrained. NTSB staff were quick to point out that their study was based on a very small sample - only 26 frontal crashes - and that their comments were meant to apply to persons wearing lap belts and not to those wearing lap belt - shoulder harness combinations which, they noted, are considerably more effective than are lap belts alone.

Nonetheless the cautions urged by NTSB have been overlooked and some people have questioned the value of all seat belts, although NTSB had in fact pointed out that even their conclusions about lap belts alone may be premature, given the minute size of their sample. With this in mind I have read through the entire NTSB report, including information about each of the 26 crashes studied, to try to determine to what extent this study meets scientific standards for research.

I must conclude that this is one of the least adequate studies I have ever reviewed as an epidemiologist. Were it submitted to any of the major refereed scientific journals in this field I strongly suspect it would be rejected because of the extremely poor research design. These design issues are the following:

1. There were important biases in the selection process. In 1984 there were 330,000 head on crashes alone reported in the U.S. plus many more than these that were front end crashes at an angle. Out of these several hundred thousand crashes NTSB chose 26 to study. These were not chosen at random. Rather, all had to be a) tow away crashes, b) not inherently nonsurvivable, c) front end collisions, d) involving at least one occupant who was wearing a lap belt, and e) brought to the attention of NTSB field staff. Regarding the last of these criteria the report notes that "after several more cases turned up involving rear seat lap belts, it

*NTSB: "Safety Study. Performance of Lap Belts in 26 Frontal Crashes." Report # NTSB/SS-86/03 Wash, D.C. 1986

was decided to alert the field investigators to look especially carefully at potential cases involving occupants restrained in the rear seat (as distinct from the earlier, more general criterion of 'at least one occupant in the vehicle using a seat belt')." It is not clear from this statement - and probably unknown to the researchers - to what extent this selection policy resulted in substantial biases toward more severe cases of injury in persons wearing lap belts.

2. The crashes in this study not only weren't typical; they were even more severe than fatal Vermont crashes. A total of 139 persons were in the 26 vehicles in this study. Only 7 of them were uninjured, representing far more serious crashes than one sees typically. In fact, for comparison I reviewed 26 consecutive fatal crashes in Vermont. In those crashes there were only 63 occupants, 15 of whom had no injuries at all, despite the fact that some of the Vermont fatalities had so much vehicle destruction that they were nonsurvivable for those who died. Thus, NTSB crashes that supposedly were survivable turned out to be more severe on average than even the most severe crashes in Vermont.

3. Almost half the data for this study came from only 8 crashes. Forty five percent of the 139 occupants were in only 8 vehicles further compromising an already grossly inadequate study size and design.

One vehicle had 14 occupants

One vehicle had 13 occupants - one adult and 12 children ages 2 to 7

One vehicle had 7 occupants

Three vehicles had 6 occupants each

Two vehicles had 5 occupants each

If NTSB was urging caution because they had studied only 26 crashes, how much more caution should they have urged since almost half their cases came from only 8 crashes?

4. This study even suggests that lap - harness combinations are useless, again reflecting poor research design. The overwhelming majority of the many seat belt studies since the early 1950s have shown that lap belts save lives by preventing

occupant ejection, but that they do not reduce the severity of those injuries that do occur. In contrast lap-shoulder harness combinations reduce not only the frequency of death but markedly reduce the severity of injury as well. Overall one can expect a 25% reduction of all injuries, a 40-50% reduction of severe injuries and a 60-75% reduction of fatal injuries. As seen in the accompanying chart by Campbell and Reinfurt, in only three studies (all with small samples) out of the 42 they examined were seatbelts found not to be of benefit, and the larger studies all showed substantial benefit.

Despite the hundreds of well designed studies that document the benefits of seatbelts in saving lives, and of lap-harness combinations in saving lives and reducing injury severity, the NTSB study not only suggested that lap belts were less protective than being totally unrestrained; it also suggested - despite the comments by NTSB to the contrary - that one was no better off with a lap-harness combination than with no restraint at all (Table 1). For all of the reasons noted above, I strongly believe that this strange conclusion was a reflection of the peculiar way the sample was chosen rather than a true finding that lap-harness combinations are not useful. They are extremely useful when compared to being unrestrained.

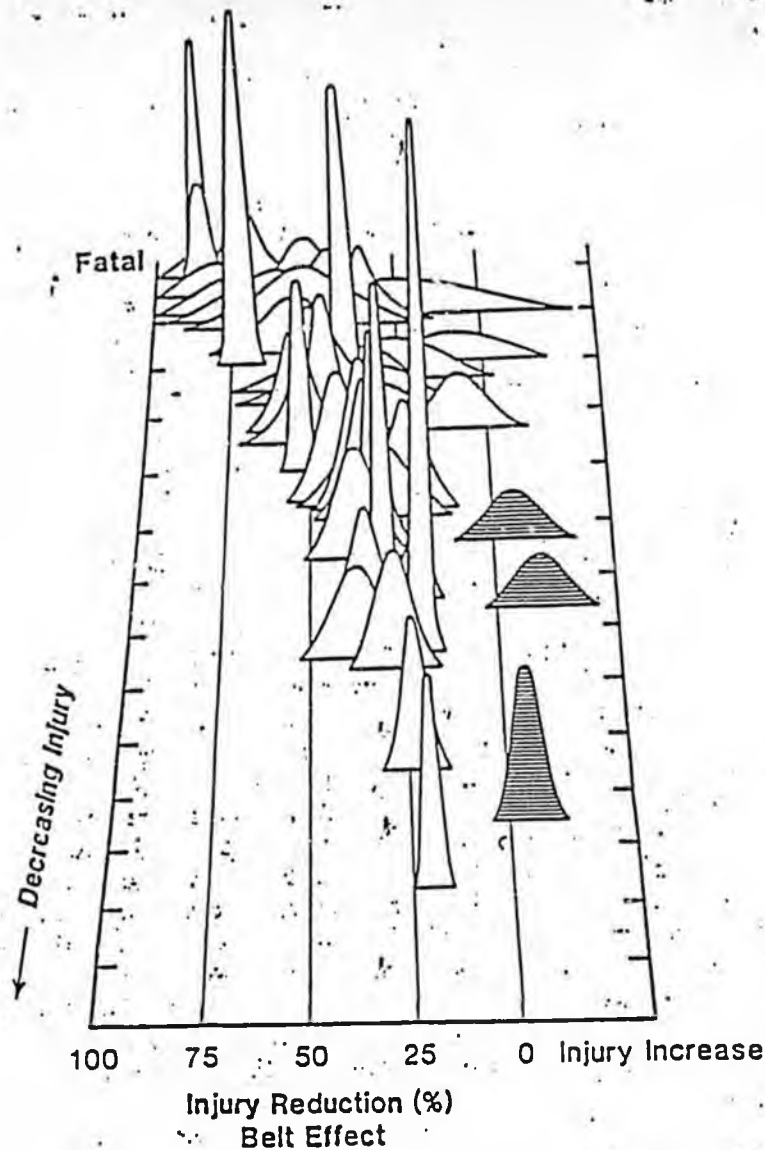
What Can One Conclude?

1. For the reasons noted above no conclusions of any sort can be reached from the NTSB study because the study design and the sample size do not meet scientific criteria for valid research. One does not set public policy based on 26 crashes, much less 8 crashes, all of which were carefully chosen so that they would be severe.

2. Based on many other studies, it does seem appropriate to conclude that:
a) lap-shoulder combinations are useful both in reducing frequency and severity of injury while lap belts alone reduce frequency of fatality but not of injury,

- b) in a minority of cases lap belts do cause injuries, but their benefits still substantially outweigh their drawbacks
- c) Whenever possible installation and use of lap-shoulder combinations is preferable to lap belts alone, including in the rear seat.
- d) Use of either lap-shoulder combinations or lap belt alone is preferable to being unrestrained.

Julian A. Waller, M.D., M.P.H.
Professor of Medicine
The University of Vermont



Source: Adapted from B.J. Campbell and D.W. Reinfurt, "The Degree of Benefit of Belts in Reducing Injury: An Attempt to Explain Study Discrepancies," (Warrendale, Pa.: Society of Automotive Engineers, SAE Technical Paper Series 790684, 1979). Reprinted with permission, copyright © 1979 Society of Automotive Engineers, Inc.

Figure 7-1. Conclusions and Margins of Error in Studies of Effectiveness of Passenger Restraints in Reducing Injuries and Fatalities.

Figure 7-1 shows how the size of samples affects the conclusion reached in studies of the effectiveness of occupant restraints in reducing injury and death.⁸ The high peaks represent highly believable results involving large samples that have a very narrow margin of error. The low flat peaks involve small samples and consequently have a much greater margin of error. This difference in sample size is one reason why studies have described seatbelts as anywhere from totally ineffective to over 75 percent effective in reducing injury. Another reason, apparent from this figure, is that seatbelts are more effective in reducing serious and fatal injuries than in reducing minor ones. Thus, the conclusion of "success" or "failure" depends on the care taken in initially defining the program goals and objectives. If the sought-after end point is to reduce *all* injuries, the effectiveness of seatbelts will be less (25 percent) than if the goal is defined as reducing *serious and fatal* injury (50 percent reduction) or *fatal injury only* (65 percent decrease).

ABBREVIATED INJURY SCALE

	0	1	2	3	4+	TOTAL
UNRESTRAINED (N=57)	7%	35	30	19	9	100%
LAP/SHOULDER (N=32)	6%	38	31	9	16	100%

$$\chi^2 = 2.204 \quad DF = 4 \quad P = .698$$

THIS CONCLUSION IS CONTRARY TO ALMOST ALL PRIOR STUDIES OF LAP/SHOULDER BELT EFFECTIVENESS.

NTSB/SS-80/03

TABLE 1

Summary of Analysis of NTSB's "Safety Study. Performance of Lap Belts in 26 Fatal Crashes." (NTSB/SS-86/03, 1986)

NTSB's recent report on lap belt performance alleges that in frontal crashes persons wearing lap belts alone may have more severe injuries than do totally unrestrained persons. Analysis of this report reveals the following:

1. It was based on only 26 frontal crashes, all towaway and involving at least one lap seatbelt wearer with emphasis on rear seatbelts, and all brought to the attention of NTSB regional staff, through a process that may have had selection biases.
2. Only 7 of the 139 vehicle occupants were uninjured, representing far more persons per crash and far higher percentage of injured persons per crash than are typically found. In fact by comparison in 26 consecutive fatal Vermont crashes there were only 63 occupants, 15 of whom were uninjured.
3. While the report is based on 26 crashes, 45% of the 139 occupants were in fact in only 8 of these crashes. One vehicle had 14 occupants, another 13 (12 of whom were under age 8), another 7 occupants, while 3 had 6 persons each and 2 had 5 persons each. If it is unwise to base public policy on only 26 crashes, how much more unwise is it to do so based largely on 8 crashes?
4. Although NTSB staff argued that lap-shoulder harness combinations are better than being unrestrained the actual data in this poorly designed study do not support their statements. The distributions of injury severity (AIS) for the 57 unrestrained occupants and the 32 occupants with lap-shoulder belts were not significantly different ($p=.7$). This again is thought to be a reflection of the flawed study design rather than of a true lack of difference between belted and unbelted persons.
5. In conclusion the defects in study design are such as to warrant that no conclusions at all be drawn from this study either for frontal crashes or for any other types of crashes.



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

August 19, 1986

Mr. James E. Burnett, Jr.
Chairman
National Transportation Safety Board
800 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20594

Dear Jim:

The Highway Users Federation wishes to comment on your recent study report: "Performance of Lap Belts in 26 Frontal Crashes" (NTSB/SS-86/03).

First, let me say that the report itself represents a strong reflection of the Board's determination to help improve safety on the nation's highways. The Federation appreciates the Board's continuing efforts to help cut the human and economic costs of traffic crashes, particularly through your timely studies.

However, in the case of NTSB/SS-86/03, we are seriously concerned about the Board's release of statistics which others have misinterpreted or misused. We speak specifically about data related to the role of lap belts in reducing traffic fatalities and injuries.

For example, certain segments of the population are over-represented in the report. About half of the accident victims (41%) studied were under 16 years of age. Twenty-four percent (24%) were six years of age or younger. Twenty percent (20%) of the victims were in two large vans, not passenger cars. Generalizing the results of these samples to represent the population as a whole or the kinds of vehicles most involved in crashes has led to erroneous conclusions.

Many of the news stories about the report reaching us have implied that lap belts are in themselves hazardous and should not be used. This conflicts with numerous other studies that show lap belts are beneficial. In particular, we cite the study based on data from the Fatal Accident Reporting System (FARS) for the years 1975-1984. The results showed a fatality reduction effectiveness of 14-24 percent resulting from the use of rear seat lap belts.

The Federation is encouraged by the report's finding that lap/shoulder belts are effective. However, the higher safety factor of lap/shoulder belts should not be allowed to detract from the fact that being buckled up even in a lap belt is far safer than riding unbuckled.

The inference drawn by some interpreters of the Board's report that back seat passengers are better off unbelted creates extremely unfortunate doubts about safety belt values. This inflicts harm to the nationwide safety belt effort. For this reason, we believe that it is incumbent on the Board to place the report's findings in proper perspective.

We believe that the motoring public deserves to know the Safety Board acknowledges in its own report that:

o The study deals with only one type of accident, the frontal crash. Inasmuch as passenger car (> 12 mph Delta) frontal crashes account for about 25 percent of all towaway crashes, the result included in your study cannot be transferred to the general accident experience.

o Lap belt benefits in minimizing occupant ejection in rollover and side-impact crashes cannot be assessed by analyzing frontal crashes alone.

✓ o The small size of the sample in the study "means that no statistically valid conclusion can be drawn from it."

o The Board states that the cases "investigated in this project are not representative of the range of real-world accidents and, therefore, the findings are not necessarily representative of overall lap belt performance."

o The Board states, "...it may be that if sufficient, accurate data were available on lap belt performance in crashes, it would be shown that lap belts reduce crash losses to a greater extent than they increase them."

Unfortunately, these qualifications have not been made clear or emphasized in the release of the report, a serious inadequacy that requires the Safety Board's immediate attention.

We feel the Board, as a public body appointed by the President of the United States, has the obligation to try to correct the misinterpretations of the study being made by the news media and the public without delay.

Sincerely,



Lester P. Lamm

EXCERPTS FROM JULY 86 STUDY
"EARLY RESULTS OF SEAT BELT LEGISLATION IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA"
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

Belt laws spark U.S. health trend

Safety belts save lives

Continued from page 1

Safety-belt-use laws that cover about 159 million U.S. residents have created a new class of citizens — survivors.

These are persons who lived through traffic accidents because they were buckled up. And many were wearing safety belts because of belt-use laws passed by lawmakers concerned about reducing the human and financial costs of accidents.

Dr. B.J. Campbell, director of the Highway Safety Research Center at the University of North Carolina, says that, in 1985, 400 Americans in eight states owed their lives to safety-belt laws during the first few months those laws were in force in their states.

Campbell studied the life-saving impact of safety-belt laws in effect during 1985 in Illinois, Michigan, Missouri, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina and Texas.

"One of the newest and most profound changes in U.S. motor-vehicle transportation history has taken place in the past two years with the enactment of these laws. Before the belt laws, safety-belt use was less than 20 percent," he said.

Now belt use is in the 40 to 50 percent range in those states, and 16 additional states have enacted belt-use laws.

"While this is a long way from the kind of compliance everyone would like to see, it's much higher than has



SAVED BY BELT: Police officer Robin Kane's car was struck in the rear while she was on duty.

ever been seen before, and it's a dramatic and agreeable improvement," he said.

Campbell said by projecting his findings in those eight states to the entire nation, 2,000 to 2,500 lives could be saved each year. "And mind you, that's with seat-belt use at its current level of 40 to 50 percent," he said.

If safety-belt laws covered all vehicles in the United States and everyone obeyed the laws, at least

7,000 to 9,000 lives would be saved annually, he said.

Police Officer Robin Kane, a member of the Suffolk County Highway Patrol, near New York City, is one of the new breed of survivors. She joined that new class April 20, 1986 when she survived an auto accident because she was wearing a safety belt.

Kane was in her patrol car, parked on the median of the Long

Island Expressway monitoring traffic, when it was struck in the rear by an auto traveling at about 60 mph. The car that hit Kane's was being driven by a drunken driver.

After the crash, Kane unfastened her safety belt and was pulled from the auto by emergency personnel.

"The trunk of the patrol car was pushed all the way to the back of the front seat, but my safety belt

Please see next page

held me in place and kept me from being more seriously injured," Kane said.

"I have worn a safety belt regularly for years and with the volume of traffic on our roads today, anyone who doesn't buckle up—and encourage their friends and family to do the same—is a fool."

Public information and grassroots education provided by state coalitions and organizations such as Traffic Safety Now, Inc. (TSN) have helped pass belt laws. TSN is a non-profit organization committed to increasing the use of safety belts to save lives and reduce injuries in the USA.

"In two short years, the state coalitions have formed the nucleus of an effective grassroots effort to pass safety-belt laws," said Charles L. Soilman, president of TSN. "It is inspiring to work with such dedicated people."

As more motorists buckle up because of safety-belt laws, fewer people are being injured in accidents and the cost to society of traffic accidents is going down, Spilman said.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), 22,000 drivers and front-seat passengers died in traffic accidents during 1984, the latest year for which complete data are available.

The cost of all accidents was about \$42 billion, according to NHTSA. That figure includes the cost of insurance expenses, productivity losses, legal and court costs and medical expenses.

Safety laws succeed outside U.S.

The click of safety belts buckling up can be heard around the world as 31 countries now carry mandatory safety belt laws.

The latest addition to the safety roll is Singapore. It joins Great Britain, Australia, West Germany, Denmark, Ireland, Canada, France and 23 other countries in which there are belt use laws.

The United States remains one of the very few industrialized nations that does not have a country-wide safety belt regulation.

Australia was the first nation to pass legislation in 1972 that required front seat occupants to buckle up. Today, with 87 percent compliance, Australians have seen traffic fatalities cut by 20 percent and serious injuries by 30 percent. Admissions to hospitals after traffic mishaps have dropped by 50 percent.

According to Britain's Department of Transport, the year Great Britain introduced its safety belt law (1983), belt usage rose from 40 to 95 percent and traffic fatalities dropped 23 percent.

Serious injuries dropped 26 percent. That first year alone 500 lives were saved and as many as 7,000 serious injuries were prevented.

Sweden instituted its safety belt law in 1975 and reduced severe and fatal injuries by 45 percent for drivers and 67 percent for passengers. Highway belt usage jumped from 35 to 81 percent.

Norway strengthened its safety belt law last year by including rear seat passengers in the mandate.

Switzerland repealed its safety belt

law in 1976, saw traffic fatalities climb and quickly reinstated the regulation in 1980. The first year the belt law was back on the books, belt usage on the expressways rose from 42 to 88 percent.

Should the U.S. choose to follow the example of its sister nations and all 50 states pass safety belt legislation, 9,140 lives could be saved and 327,000 disabling injuries prevented, according to U.S. Department of Transportation estimates based on a belt use rate of 70 percent.



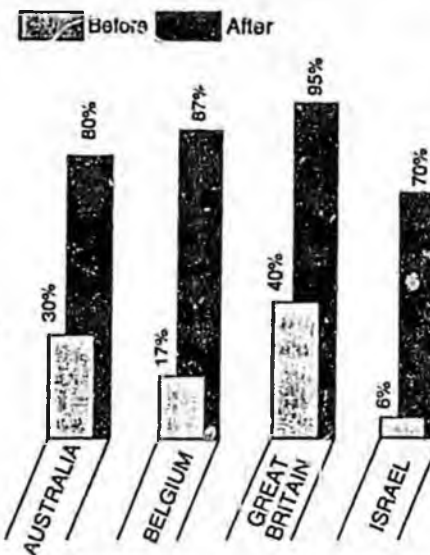
The case for requiring safety belt use is bolstered by the success of legislation around the world. Australia has the longest track record for belt use legislation and its benefits. The effect of compulsory belt use in Australia in 1972 was a dramatic reduction in injuries and fatalities.

During the first two post-legislation years, there was a 30 percent reduction in eye injuries; facial injuries were reduced by half and spinal injuries by a third. A drop of more than 50 percent was documented in the number of drivers admitted to hospitals per 1,000 vehicles on the road.

COUNTRIES WITH SAFETY BELT USE LAWS

Country	Effective Date	Country	Effective Date
Australia	1972	Ireland	1979
Austria	1976	Israel	1975
Belgium	1975	Ivory Coast	1970
Brazil	1977	Japan	1971
Bulgaria	1976	Luxembourg	1975
Canadian Provinces		Malawi	1982
British Columbia	1977	Malaysia	1979
Manitoba	1984	Netherlands	1975
Newfoundland	1982	New Zealand	1972
New Brunswick	1983	Norway	1975
Ontario	1976	Portugal	1982
Quebec	1976	Puerto Rico	1974
Saskatchewan	1977	South Africa	1977
Czechoslovakia	1975	Spain	1974
Denmark	1976	Sweden	1975
Finland	1975	Switzerland	1976
France	1973	Turkey	1982
Great Britain	1983	USSR	1976
Greece	1979	West Germany	1976
Hungary	1977	Yugoslavia	1977
Iceland	1981		

CHANGES IN USAGE RATES UNDER MANDATORY SEAT BELT USE LAWS (Selected Countries)



More than a decade has passed since belt use became mandatory throughout Australia. Belt wearing is now around 80 percent overall. As a result, it is conservatively estimated that vehicle occupant deaths have been reduced by 20 percent and serious injuries by 30 percent.

After the enactment of the 1975 belt use law in Sweden, the frequency of severe and fatal injuries was reduced by 45 percent for drivers and 67 percent for passengers while belt use rose to 85 percent!

The most recent nation to enact a belt use law was Great Britain where the law went into effect on January 31, 1983.

In the 12-month period prior to the law, there were 2,058 fatalities and 26,541 serious injuries to front seat occupants of passenger cars and light vans. In the succeeding year with the law in effect, belt use jumped to 95 percent from the previous 40 percent, fatalities declined by 23 percent and serious injuries by 26 percent.

1985-86
DATA

1985 ESTIMATES

TEN GOOD REASONS

WHY WE NEED A

SEATBELT LAW

IN

ALASKA

ALASKA HIGHWAY USERS FEDERATION
FOR

SAFETY AND MOBILITY

AND

AUTOMOBILE SAFETY FOUNDATION

P.O. BOX 92665

ANCHORAGE, AK 99509



IN ALASKA

One thing alone can save 35 lives a year, reduce the hardship and costs of over 600 injuries, save \$5 million worth of lost labor, and decrease economic losses associated with highway death and injury alone by as much as \$13 million: WEARING THE SEATBELTS ALREADY IN OUR CARS.

These facts are just four of the reasons Alaska needs a law requiring seatbelt use. Although a major purpose of a Alaska seatbelt use law would be to promote the safety of drivers and passengers using their seatbelts, such a law would also:

- . promote the safety of street and highway travelers other than seatbelt users;
- . promote the public welfare and safety by reducing highway deaths and injuries and public expenditures.

In other words, if Alaska requires seatbelts to be worn -- everyone can benefit!

The questions and answers are the good reasons why we NEED a seatbelt law in Alaska!

1Q -- How many people are killed in traffic accidents in Alaska annually?

A -- In 1985, there were 127 traffic accident fatalities. This number includes pedestrians, motor vehicle drivers and passengers, bicyclists and motorcyclists.

2Q -- How many people are injured in traffic accidents?

A -- Over 7,500 drivers, passengers, pedestrians and cyclists were injured in 1985.

3Q -- What is the estimated economic loss to Alaskans from traffic accident deaths and injuries annually?

A -- The cost of all motor vehicle accidents, excluding property damage-only crashes, exceeded \$82 million in 1985.

4Q -- How many of the people killed were occupants of passenger cars?

A -- Of the 127 people killed in Alaska traffic accidents in 1985, 100 (79%) were drivers and passengers of cars.

5Q -- How many of the people killed were occupants of passenger cars?

A -- Of the 7,500 traffic accident injuries, 73 percent (5,500) were to occupants of passenger cars.

6Q -- What is the annual cost of passenger car occupant deaths and injuries?

A -- The estimated cost of fatalities and injuries to passenger car occupants amounted to \$62 million in 1985.

7Q -- How many passenger car occupant deaths could have been prevented if seatbelt use were required in Alaska?

A -- Based on the assumption that a seatbelt use law would result in 80 percent usage and that belts are 50 percent effective in reducing fatalities, it is estimated that 35 lives could have been saved in 1985.

8Q -- How many passenger car occupant injuries could have been prevented if belt use were required?

A -- An estimated 600 injuries could have been prevented with 80 percent belt usage. Seatbelts are believed to be 50 percent effective in reducing moderate to critical injuries and 10 percent effective in reducing minor injuries.

9Q -- What would be the estimated annual cost savings if seatbelt use were required?

A -- A savings of more than \$18 million in medical costs, insurance expenses, legal costs, loss of productivity and other costs could be expected -- based on 1985 accident figures. This savings does not include accident costs in which only property damage was involved.

10Q -- Of the annual cost savings, what amounts can be attributed to savings from medical costs, legal costs, insurance expenses, human capital costs such as loss of productivity, and other costs such as police, fire department and emergency medical services costs?

A -- The estimated cost savings are:

Medical Costs.....	\$ 2,000,000
Legal Costs.....	\$ 2,000,000
Insurance Expenses.....	\$ 7,000,000
Human Capital Costs.....	\$ 5,000,000
Other Costs.....	\$ 2,000,000
TOTAL	\$18,000,000

THE NUMBER AND COST OF TRAFFIC
ACCIDENT DEATHS AND INJURIES
IN ALASKA, 1985

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Costs</u>
All Traffic Accident Fatalities	127	\$44,000,000
All Traffic Accident Injuries	7,500	\$38,000,000
Passenger Car Occupant Fatalities	100	\$34,600,000
Passenger Car Occupant Injuries	5,500	\$28,000,000
Passenger Car Occupant Deaths Prevented If Belt Use Were Required	35	\$12,000,000 savings
Passenger Car Occupant Injuries Prevented If Belt Use Were Required	600	\$ 6,000,000 savings

NOTES

- . All figures for 1985 -- the latest year for which complete accident statistics are available.
- . All costs are given in \$1985.
- . The fatality figures used to answer questions 1 and 4 are taken directly from the Fatal Accident Reporting System (FARS 1985) of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.
- . The injury figures are estimates based on State data.
- . The State totals were adjusted to include an estimate of unreported accident injuries.
- . The cost figures are based on estimates derived from The Economic Cost To Society of Motor Vehicle-Accidents published by NHTSA in May 1983.

- All other figures are based on estimates by the Highway Users Federation.
- (1985 is the latest year for which complete data are available to HUF-ASF.)

The Valley SUN

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VOLUME 9, NUMBER 24 The Valley Sun, Wasilla, Ak. February 10, 1987 Page 3 FEBRUARY 10, 1987

OPINION

Seat-belt law would stem highway carnage

Surprising as it might seem, a recent public opinion poll shows 65 percent of state residents surveyed are in favor of a mandatory seat-belt law. In the Mat-Su Valley, those polled favored a seat-belt law by 69 percent.

Legislation proposing such a law is expected to be introduced within a week, and with such overwhelming support by Alaskans, it should be fairly painless for legislators to give it speedy passage.

Statistics from states with seat-belt laws indicate that use of the restraints climbed dramatically once the laws were in place. The benefits of the increased use were also dramatic. Traffic fatalities were chopped between 10 and 26 percent, and costs to state governments caused by auto-accident injuries were also cut substantially.

EDITORIALLY SPEAKING

In Alaska, seat-belt legislation backers say the law would save between 20 and 50 lives each year, prevent 700 injuries, and save the state \$12 million in medical and legal expenses and in lost production. If enacted, failure to wear seat belts would be a secondary offense, meaning that drivers would be charged only if they were stopped for some other offense.

The results of the recent poll, commissioned by the Alaska Safety Belt Use Coalition, indicated that even Alaskans who don't regularly use seat belts see their value and support a law making them mandatory. The

non-bucklers apparently believe that if it was mandated by law, they would be more consistent in buckling up.

Some people might object to such a law on the grounds it interferes with some of their personal freedom. But as every new driver learns, driving is a privilege and not a right. The state stipulates numerous duties drivers must perform to maintain that privilege, and it is not a civil rights issue to impose on more requirement.

Twenty-four states have adopted mandatory seat-belt laws. In Alaska, a measure last year teetered and fell in the House on a vote of 20 to 20. This year, now that it is clearly the will of the people to institute this life-saving measure, legislators should give it the enthusiastic support it needs and deserves.

JUNEAU EMPIRE

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 1987

Seat belt law common sense

If you were making a list of common-sense ideas that are so obvious they shouldn't require legislation, bucking your seat belt would be at the top.

It shouldn't require legislation, but according to a recent poll, most Alaskans believe it does. A statewide poll by Marc Hellenthal of Hellenthal & Associates shows that a majority of Alaskans favors a mandatory seat belt law for our state.

Sixty-five percent of Alaskans said they favored the passage of state legislation that would require drivers and front-seat passengers of cars to wear their seat belts. A total of 1,473 Alaskan adults were interviewed in the poll, which was conducted Jan. 8-17.

Support for a seat belt law is widespread across the state. In Anchorage, the support was 65.1 percent; in Fairbanks, it was 56.8 percent; in Southeast Alaska, it was 74 percent; in Kodiak, it was 65.7 percent; in rural Alaska, it was 77.7 percent; and in South Anchorage, Valdez and the Matanuska-Susitna Valley, the support was 60.6 percent.

Only Kenai residents were opposed to a seat belt law, by a slight margin, 49.8 to 50.2 percent.

Few Alaskans have not been in a serious auto accident personally or had a friend, co-worker or relative involved in one. To say the least, the experience is not fun. All too many times, an auto accident results in serious injuries that often are permanent.

It only seems that if there was a way to reduce the severity of injuries suffered in auto accidents — or avoid injuries altogether — the Alaska Legislature should mandate it.

That's exactly what a seat belt law would do. Jaywalking is illegal, and so are other acts that can be dangerous. How, then, is driving without seat belts fastened, which is just as dangerous, different?

It's not. That's why a mandatory seat belt law, which would cost the state nothing, is needed in Alaska.

ISSUE: Is a seat belt law needed in Alaska?



Editorials

A-8 Tuesday, March 11, 1986, The Anchorage Times

Lifesavers

THE DEBATE over the mandatory use of seat belts has divided those who view them as a life-saving device and those who resist any infringement, no matter how well-intentioned, on personal freedom.

Even those who oppose the bill pending in the state House don't deny what repeated studies have proven — that wearing seat belts saves lives.

A law requiring that children under the age of seven be restrained while riding in automobiles was passed in 1984 with little debate. Few would be willing to contest any action intended to save the lives of little children. Yet adults view the situation differently when it's applied to them.

OPPONENTS argue that they have the right to take responsibility for their own actions. They are willing to bear the possible consequences of not buckling up. "It's my life," is their rallying cry.

But not all of those rugged individualists are killed outright by their folly. Some are only maimed. Society is then

forced to take up the burden of caring for those who won't or can't take care of themselves.

Various statistics have been printed in these columns intended to prove the value of wearing seat belts. Here's one more argument:

A three-year-old girl escaped uninjured Memorial Day weekend when the car in which she was riding went out of control and rolled over on the Sterling Highway. She was securely strapped into her car seat. The girl's mother, who was driving the car, wasn't wearing her seat belt. She was killed.

MOST PEOPLE don't resist the idea of wearing seat belts, given sober reflection. After all, Alaskans are used to strapping themselves in every time they get on an airplane — and nobody argues about that.

Let's look at it this way: If a law requiring the use of seat belts merely jogs the memories of those who simply aren't in the habit of buckling up, and gets them into the habit of doing so, isn't it a worthwhile exercise in good lawmaking?

opinion

Anchorage Daily News



Winner, 1976 Pulitzer Prize Gold Medal for Public Service

Gerald E. Grilly
Publisher

Howard Weaver
Managing Editor

Suzan Nightingale
Editorial Page Editor

Katherine Fanning, Editor and Publisher 1971 to 1983
Lawrence Fanning, Editor and Publisher 1967 to 1971

Alaska's Only Morning Newspaper • Founded in 1946 by Norman C. Brown

Buckle up or pay price

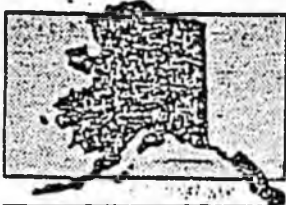
3/13/86
If you leave your car parked in one spot for too long, the worst that happens is that someone else can't find a parking spot — and you will pay a small fine. But if you drive without a seat belt, you increase the risk of injury or death.

Some Alaskans think government goes too far when it proposes a small fine for people who don't wear their seat belts. Fortunately, the Alaska state House put those arguments aside and voted 22-16 to require use of seat belts in cars that have them.

As experience has shown in the 17 states that passed similar measures, seat belt laws save lives. Michigan reported 14 percent fewer traffic deaths in the seven months since its law took effect, with 87 lives saved.

Alaska's proposed law is hardly a Draconian measure. There will be no SWAT teams snooping on moving cars; officers will check compliance as they enforce other traffic laws. The fine is only \$15, hardly more than a parking ticket in Anchorage.

A seat belt law is a reasonable way for the state to encourage people to do what's good for them. And those who find the law objectionable can refuse to buckle up — they'll just have to pay a price for doing so. If they're lucky, it will only cost them \$15. If they're not, it could cost them their lives.



Editorials

In half the time

LIKE THE winter season, the legislature down in the state of Washington has come and gone. Ahead of schedule, yet.

Unlike Alaska, where the legislature convened in January and is still in session with an adjournment date scheduled for May 12, the 120th day, the lawmakers at Olympia convened in January for a session limited to 60 days.

They adjourned last week, on the 59th day — a day ahead of schedule and with an envious record of achievements behind them.

BY ALL ACCOUNTS, the 1986 Washington Legislature was one of the best in the state's history.

Veterans of past legislative wars — and newspapers that have noted the failures of earlier sessions — expressed equal astonishment and pleasure. For example, the Seattle Times reported that the 59-day session left behind "a surprisingly long

list of accomplishments."

Gov. Booth Gardner saw at least a dozen major pieces of legislation clear both houses — including one bill, it's worth noting here, that will make seat belt use mandatory in Washington. Under terms of that legislation, drivers and passengers who fail to buckle up will receive warnings through the rest of this year. Effective Jan. 1, 1987, tickets will be issued by police to those who fail to use their seat belts.

THE POINT for Alaskans to remember is that other states, with much larger populations and many more issues to confront, can handle legislative chores in half the time it takes our lawmakers and do it in good fashion.

So could Alaska, if only the professional politicians who populate the legislature would quit thinking they have been elected to a lifetime career job.

opinion

Anchorage Daily News



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Alaska's Only Morning Newspaper • Founded in 1946 by Norman C. Brown

Time to buckle up

On the issue of requiring Alaskans to use their seat belts, the state House recently took a drive backwards. Fortunately, today it can go forward once again.

In March, the House passed a seat belt law, 22-16. But on a reconsideration vote, it sent the bill back to committee. Rural legislators opposed the bill, saying it was unnecessary in areas where lower speeds and little traffic pose fewer risks. Their concerns are understandable, and an amendment today will address them.

That still leaves strong opposition from those who think government shouldn't require people to do what's good for them. But wearing a seat belt is a life and death matter that does affect one's fellow citizens. Not buckling up leaves society to pick up the pieces — in this case, with more rescue services, greater health care costs and higher insurance rates. State government does not reach too far when it says buckle up or face a \$15 fine.

MAY 2 1988

ALASKA CLIPPING
SERVICE

Anchorage Times
Anchorage, AK

A matter of life and death

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FOR THE LACK of one vote, a bill died which would have made seatbelt use in Alaska mandatory. That's too bad. But let's offer a prediction. In another year — or maybe two, or even three — the Alaska law will be changed and motorists will be required to buckle up. And by then, after more people have died unnecessarily on our streets and highways, the mandatory nature of the law will be no big deal.

There's no denying that wearing seatbelts saves lives, and that's not the argument used by opponents of the bill.

They see mandating seatbelt use as an infringement on personal freedom. They don't say that about fastening seatbelts in an airplane.

AIRPLANE passengers buckle up as a matter of course — even though the chances of needing a fastened seatbelt is a hundred times more likely in an automobile than it is in an airplane.

But one foe of this proposed legislation called it a

case of "coersive do-gooderism."

Yet a young Hillside woman probably has her seatbelt to thank for her life. Several weeks ago, her car left the road after she fell asleep at the wheel. The vehicle smashed through a row of mailboxes and became airborne before coming to rest in a gully 300 feet away. She escaped without serious injury.

JUST this week, Anchorage police arriving on the scene of a rollover accident expected to find a body inside the crushed car. They expressed surprise on finding that the driver suffered only minor injuries. He, too, was wearing his seatbelt.

These two instances are just the latest to be related in these columns in an effort to change the minds of people who resist the idea of taking those extra few seconds to buckle up.

The legislature has chosen to leave that decision up to the individual. Hopefully, responsible Alaskans will choose life over death.

Editorial Opinion and Comment of

FAIRBANKS

Daily News - Miner

"Independent in All Things . . . Neutral in None"

Other opinions expressed on this page do not necessarily reflect those of the Daily News-Miner.

JUN 1 1 1986

Seat belts save lives

Even though mandatory seat belt usage failed to become law this year, the Alaska Safety Belt Use Coalition hasn't given up its efforts. The organization has vowed to press next year's legislators to approve the legislation.

The group has begun its 1987 push by citing accidents during the recent Memorial Day weekend in which neither person who died in highway crashes wore a seat belt. The five passengers in those two fatal wrecks all were wearing seat belts and survived.

Other data cited by the coalition says 20 to 50 lives could be saved annually in Alaska if a mandatory seat belt law were enacted, 700 fewer people would be injured, and \$12 million would be saved in medical cost insurance and legal expenses, lost production, and human capital costs.

Last year, of the 126 persons killed in traffic accidents in Alaska, at least 79 were not wearing seat belts.

In addition to the safety factor, the group cites the cost effectiveness of seat belts. Studies show that for every dollar invested in safety belt use, the state saves \$37.50.

Public acceptance of the need to use seat belts would be a benefit to all Alaskans. It would help save lives, and reduce needless injuries and expenses.



Editorials

Anchorage Times/June 28, 86
Why not save a life?

AS THE mass of evidence continues to grow, it becomes harder and harder to deny that wearing seat belts saves lives. Time and time again, accident reports tell of cases where the occupants of vehicles involved in serious accidents emerge relatively unscathed because they were wearing their seat belts.

A current TV spot graphically illustrates, with dummies, what happens when an unrestrained infant is involved in a collision. Simply put, the baby dummy is crushed against the dashboard by the weight of the grown-up dummy. Unfortunately, it's a situation which too often occurs in real life.

RECENT STUDIES indicate an alarming decline in the use of safety devices, particularly among the very young.

A University of Alaska study conducted in Anchorage shopping mall parking lots found that more than half the children observed were riding unrestrained in

automobiles. The drivers of those vehicles, most likely the children's parents, were breaking the law.

Alaska's Child Restraint Law requires that children under the age of seven be buckled into a seat belt or confined in a federally approved safety seat when riding in a vehicle. Alaska's not alone in this requirement, as most states have similar laws on the books.

NOR IS Alaska alone in its lack of compliance, which runs about 50 percent nationwide.

The Alaska Legislature, in its wisdom, decided last session to let adults decide for themselves whether or not to buckle up. It's not an option for children.

For many Anchorage families, this is the season for long Sunday drives and excursions around the state. Those few extra seconds needed to properly restrain a child may save that child from becoming another sad statistic. It's a matter of life and death — and it's the law.

JUNEAU EMPIRE

Alaska seatbelt law is needed

Few people utter so much as a word of objection when forced to fasten their seatbelts on an airliner, yet when someone mentions the possibility of a law mandating the same action in a car, all sorts of squawks result.

Seatbelts are not new. Neither is the fact that seatbelts save lives. But whenever a move is made to enact a seatbelt law, instead of stretching to fasten those life-savers, a great many people prefer instead to stretch logic to argue against it:

They say seatbelts are uncomfortable. They say they won't get in an accident. And most amazingly, they say it is a matter of civil liberties whether they want to buckle a seatbelt.

Consider this: Some seatbelts are uncomfortable, but not as uncomfortable as bouncing your head off a dashboard or a windshield in an accident. People say they won't get into an accident, but every day of the week, someone in Juneau alone is involved in one. Not a single one of those accidents is planned.

Finally, there's the weakest argument of all - civil liberties. When it comes to freedom of speech and freedom of religion, the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights speak loudly and clearly. But nowhere is there a right not to wear seatbelts. In fact, if there were such a right, no doubt someone somewhere would have challenged in court airline regulations requiring seatbelts.

The plain fact of the matter is that seatbelt use can - and should - be mandated by state law. Many states have already enacted such a law, and as a result the number of people killed each year on their highways has been reduced.

And that's the whole point of having a seatbelt law: saving lives. If it didn't save lives, no one would care whether anyone wore seatbelts. If it didn't save lives, probably no cars would even have them.

Seatbelts do save lives. But the only way they do that is if people wear them. That's why a law is needed in Alaska to mandate seatbelt use.

ALASKA CLIPPING
SERVICE

Juneau, Empire
Juneau, AK

OCT 17 1985

63

Cost of living is buckling up

Imagine a disease that claims 40,000-50,000 lives every year. Another 2 million people are hurt by it annually, many so seriously they will never return to their normal lifestyle. Every man, woman and child has a 33 percent chance of catching it during his or her lifetime. It is the leading cause of death in Americans between the ages of 1 and 38, and it accounts for the majority of new cases of paraplegia and is the primary cause of epilepsy.

If this disease were real, you could bet there would be telethons, fund-raising drives and massive research efforts. You could bet that if there were a way to prevent the deaths and injuries through legislation, state legislatures and Congress would adopt a law in a minute.

This "disease" isn't the kind caused by bacteria, and it isn't carried in genes. It is caused by simple mistakes, errors in judgment, bad weather or other circumstances.

This "disease" is serious auto accidents. Though there may not be a way to stop them - except by driving defensively and keeping your vehicle in good operating condition -- there is definitely a way to reduce the number of deaths and injuries they cause.

It's called a seat belt. It has been installed in every new car sold in the country since 1965, yet only an estimated 13.8 percent of drivers regularly wears one.

According to the National Highway Safety Administration, half of the people who die each year in auto accidents could have survived if they had worn their seat belts.

Despite that fact of life, people continue to die simply because they refuse to wear a seat belt.

Ironically, in all 50 states, a mother is required to secure her child in her car, but in Alaska at least, she is not required to use her seat belt while she drives the car. That means if she is involved in a serious auto accident, her child has a far better chance of surviving or escaping injury than she does.

Rep. Mike Miller of Juneau is sponsoring a bill in the Alaska Legislature aimed at evening those odds. If adopted, his bill would require the driver and front- and back-seat passengers to wear seat belts.

According to a statewide poll conducted for the Alaska Safety Belt Use Coalition by pollster Marc Hellerthal, 66 percent of Alaskans support such a law. Slightly more than 79 percent said they would wear their seat belts if required by law, and an equal percentage said a seat belt law should be strictly enforced.

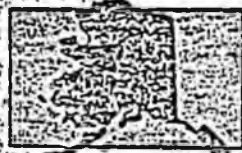
A small number of people have railed against the idea of mandating that Alaskans wear seat belts. They say it is a violation of their rights and that government has no business telling them what to do, even when it comes to personal safety.

When considered in a vacuum, those arguments make a certain amount of sense. If a person wants to bang his head against a brick wall and if it hurts no one else, he should be allowed to do it. It is simply impossible to legislate against self-inflicted injuries.

When a person doesn't wear a seat belt and is killed or injured in an auto accident, he is hurting far more than himself. He is costing himself and his family in lost health, money and companionship. The person driving the other car involved in the accident also must pay, coping with the memory of hurting or killing another person who wasn't wearing a seat belt.

To that small number of people who believe in liberty or death, those costs may be worth not having to buckle a seat belt.

To the 66 percent of Alaskans who favor a seat belt law, however, those costs shouldn't have to be paid at all.



Editorials

16 states do it

THREE TRAFFIC deaths were recorded in Alaska last weekend, but hardly caused a ripple of public reaction. The tragedy was real and immediate and lasting for the families and friends of the victims. But the general public, we note sadly, was largely untroubled.

The truth is that unless we are personally acquainted with those involved, the reports of traffic fatalities roll off our ears like yesterday's weather report. The deaths of this past weekend might as well have happened in Georgia or Alabama.

THOSE WHO DIED are fellow Alaskans. They had something to contribute to our city and our state. Their lives mattered. They were loved and cherished. Because of them, in whatever way they individually were part of the community, Alaska was a better place. Without them, we are all a little less than we were.

Every death brings sorrow, but sudden death — the kind that comes at the crashing end of a traffic mishap — is perhaps the most wrenching of all.

Could these deaths have been prevented? We don't know. But we do know that

other deaths can be prevented if only we'll heed the statistics that support use of seat belts by motorists.

DRAMATIC EVIDENCE that buckling up does save lives is provided in the experience of four states that imposed mandatory seat-belt laws this year.

In New York, where the law went into effect Jan. 1, 28 percent fewer drivers and passengers have died in accidents so far this year compared with last. The same percentage is reported in Michigan since July 1, when its law went into effect.

Illinois began enforcing its law on Aug. 1 and now reports a 27.9 percent decline in fatal accidents in August and September compared to the same months a year ago.

New Jersey, where the law has been in effect for four months, reports a 13 percent decline in fatalities compared to last year.

California, Connecticut, Hawaii, Indiana, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma and Texas are the other states with mandatory seat-belt laws. Isn't it worth it to add Alaska to that list?

Letters to the Editor

Wednesday, February 25, 1987

Fairbanks Daily News-Miner, Fairbanks, Alaska

Favors seat belts

Feb. 11, 1987
411 Fourth Ave.
Fairbanks, AK 99701

To the editor:

I would like to take issue with two recent statements attributed to Ed Hoch in the issue of Feb. 6, 1987.

1. "Seat belts are dangerous for pregnant women." Ejector seats are similarly dangerous for pilots of jet fighters, yet no one nowadays would refuse to equip a fighter with such a seat, and condemn the pilot to destruction whenever his aeroplane crashed. The point is that seat belts are designed to prevent more serious injury than might result when they are not worn in a car crash. Surely, pregnant women are more likely than non-pregnant women to wear a seat belt, if they have any concern for the well-being of their baby.

2. "Seat belts make many obese people uncomfortable." Perhaps some obese people are uncomfortable wearing seat belts, but the majority may feel any lack of comfort is more than made up for by the increased sense of security. Besides, it is possible to buy devices called "belt extenders" from auto dealers. These devices provide extra webbing, so the seat belt fits better.

Having had extensive experience in treating people with severe injuries resulting from car wrecks in which seat belts were not worn, and having seen many people who had some injuries, even from the belts themselves, but nevertheless who escaped serious injuries because they wore seat belts, I am convinced that a mandatory seat belt law in Alaska would prevent many serious injuries.

Unlike Mr. Hoch, sometimes I am in favor of protecting people in spite of themselves, as for example

in insisting vehicles stop at a red light, whether the drivers like it or not. Sometimes, discipline is necessary even when we do not feel like it.

Sincerely,
James G. Gollogly, M.D.
Orthopaedic Surgeon

Anchorage Times
Anchorage, AK

FEB 23 1987

Put seat belts into law

Dear Editor:

Over the past two weeks I have watched several TV debates, news programs and read news articles concerning a mandatory seat belt law in Alaska.

I have been amazed at the failure of the opponents of a seat belt law to realize that one of the ways the state of Alaska can save money and lives is through passage of mandatory seat belt legislation. People who oppose the mandatory seat belt law don't expect to be left bleeding and broken at the scene if their folly leads to disaster.

They expect to be attended by emergency medical technologists, transported to modern hospitals and treated in emergency rooms.

They expect physicians and other medical professionals to completely cure them at no cost so they can get back in their cars and speed away unencumbered and unrestrained.

Another point that needs clarification is education. For years this state has been spending money on seat belt education campaigns. When the campaigns end seat belt usage rates fall. Education is great, but it must work hand-in-hand with a law. Experience in the 24 states that have a seat belt law has shown that high belt use can only be attained with the combination of seat belt laws and education. A mandatory seat belt law will cost nothing to the state's treasury and will save the state millions of dollars.

Janet Thornton
Elmendorf



SIDEWALK POLL

by Patty Langman

How would you feel about a mandatory seatbelt law?



Candace Ranney
Student

Since I never wear one, it would be difficult for me to be comfortable with a law like that—although I realize it does save lives.



JoAnn Loughran
Housewife

I think it would be a good law. There's a law for children under the age of 7 to be in a carseat or seatbelt, why not set a good example!



John Dunker
Self-employed Woodworker

If it could be done without greatly increasing enforcement costs, I think it could be a good public education tool, perhaps a necessary one.



Bertie Selvey
Bridge Player

I'm 100% for it! Fastening seatbelts is an easy habit to form and is well worth the effort. Lives and injuries saved by seatbelts make the need for this law obvious.



Cindy Rutherford
Counselor

I feel that seatbelts are definitely life-saving devices and should be utilized whenever appropriate. I think the law should be implemented!

Letters from the people

A way to save lives, money

Alaska at the present time is suffering from a serious budget crisis. In order to deal with the budget mess many ideas have been brought forward. One issue that should be considered is a mandatory seat belt law. If you think about it, a mandatory seat belt law will lessen the economic loss in Alaska from auto related injuries which is estimated to cost the state each year some \$12 million, including lost wages, medical expenses, insurance costs, and property damage.

It is an unquestionable fact that Alaska cannot afford not to buckle up. A mandatory seat belt law will not only save lives and lessen injuries but it will help save the state of Alaska millions of dollars.

— Debra Turner

12-9-86 NEWS
MILNER

Require seat belts

Dec. 1, 1986
542 Fourth Ave.
Fairbanks, AK 99701

To the editor:

To fasten or not to fasten a seat belt is not a matter of personal privilege. There is a responsibility to the public that is of greater importance. Children left without a parent can become a ward of the public. Hospital treatment inflates cost of medical attention and of insurance premiums. Liability claims affect the cost of auto insurance. Auto accidents are the biggest single cause of lost work time and on-the-job fatalities. Americans lose 45 million work days a year as a result of car crashes. Highway accidents cause more deaths than heart attacks and falls combined. On and off the job accidents cost \$70 billion a year.

A family member and passenger would not have survived an accident, not their fault, (and two blocks from their office) had they not been fastened in. The ambulance driver said, "We have a fatality here" as they approached. Another recent accident, in which the fatality was impaled on the steering wheel column, could have been less serious if a seat belt had been in place.

Today 25 states and the District of Columbia have mandatory seat belt laws. Alaska needs one also.

Sincerely,
Everett Wilde
Special Agent
The Prudential

Seat belts would save lives

Over 45,000 lives are lost each year on our nation's highways, and hundreds of thousands are seriously injured, some with permanent disabilities. Motor vehicle accidents are the leading cause of death for persons between the ages of one and 34 years in the U.S..

Seat belts alone could save 9,000 to 12,000 lives each year, thousands of disabling injuries, and billions of dollars in costs.

In 1985 there were 121 motor vehicle related fatalities statewide, of which 100 were occupants. But only six were wearing seat belts.

There are three ways to get people to use occupant restraints: (1) education; (2) mandatory seat belt laws; and (3) passive restraints.

More lives could be saved by a combination of all three strategies. Better crash protection systems include safety belts combined with air bags.

Twenty-six states plus the District of Columbia have passed mandatory seat belt legislation. Let's hope Alaska is not the last state to recognize that a mandatory seat belt law makes sense. And finally, let's start putting more pressure on the automobile industry to install passive restraints in all new cars.

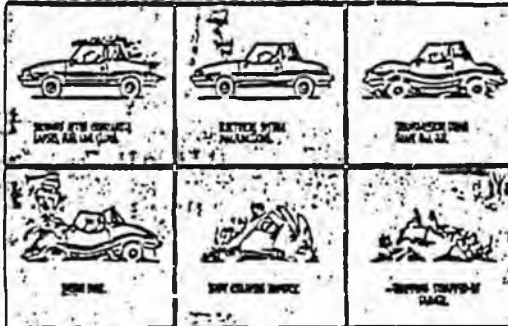
— Mark S. Johnson
Juneau

10/21/86 Anchorage Daily News



Should Alaska have a mandatory seat belt law?

WHY SEAT BELTS ARE UNSAFE IN AMERICAN-MADE CARS



A. Non-use of belts causes hardship for many

I am pained by the number of people appearing with a mandatory seat belt, who are apparently making the impression that driving a car under such circumstances is a crime.

On the contrary, the use of an automobile as public roads is a privilege, considered upon individual by the state in which he or she lives.

Deaths on motor-vehicle accidents each year, directly related to the absence of safety belts, exceed many thousands and result in billions of dollars in property damage.

As an automobile is a deadly weapon — capable of killing or maiming innocent people, causing millions of dollars of damage, and causing personal and financial ruin — it is necessary that it be used in a safe manner. It is necessary that you wear a seat belt in the event of an accident. It is necessary because of all the other people who will be in a car with you, and because of the lives that have been saved and will be saved by the use of seat belts.

— *Mark Baker*

A. Legislation likely will be back next year

A proposal to make seat belt use mandatory in Alaska passed in early March but failed on a re-vote by a 20-20 vote. The passage of the bill on the seat belt law is along with the substantial public approval in Anchorage and the Alaska State Legislature in favor of a law and only 200 people signed the petition to bring the bill to the Alaska State Legislature.

Because of the passage of seat belt law in 1967 and the District of Columbia, the number of persons using safety belts is now approximately 80 percent. These laws are making a difference in people's safety habits, saving money from the number and severity of injuries.

Statistics show that a minimum of 20-25 lives can be saved in Alaska if a mandatory seat belt law is enacted and that 700 lives can be saved and 200 million dollars in medical and hospital expenses, lost production and human capital can be saved.

In addition to the safety belts, seat belt laws are also effective. Statistics show that for every dollar invested in safety belts, the state saves \$100. Safety belts can reduce traffic fatalities, which are eight times as expensive to investigate than non-fatal accidents. Citizens would have more time to concentrate on other traffic enforcement programs.

Some citizens beyond a doubt that the Alaska State Legislature should pass this safety legislation as the top of its 1969 agenda.

— *Fred Backlund*
Emergency Director
Alaska State Police

A. Every driver should have to do their part

A seat belt law should serve to remind the driver and riding public that, with other traffic laws, you shouldn't drive irresponsibly. It's your responsibility when you don't try to do your part to prevent or reduce the severity of the accident.

— *Phil Orr*

A. Saying three justifies a seat belt law

Automobile accidents are the single greatest killer of young people today. Using safety belts and not drinking and driving can substantially change the grim statistics.

Alaska has a seat belt law for children and for single laws for drunk drivers, but the law is not being used. We need a seat belt law for all drivers.

I believe legislation that will save 20-25 Alaska lives a year is legislation that needs to be passed by our legislature.

— *Donna Steady*

A. Medical council supports a safety belt law

The Board of Directors of the Anchorage Region Emergency Medical Services Council has, by unanimous vote, supported a mandatory seat belt law for Alaska.

The Board of Directors consists of 21 members from all over Southcentral and Southeastern Alaska. These folks are veteran Emergency Medical Technicians, paramedics, nurses and physicians who have dedicated much of their lives to providing care to those in need. They have also seen firsthand the benefits of the use of safety

A. Buckle up with or without law

As a general rule, I would not recommend that you wear your seat belt. I would not recommend that you wear your seat belt. I would not recommend that you wear your seat belt. I would not recommend that you wear your seat belt.

— *Thomas D. Smith*
President/Executive Director

A. Mandatory law succeeds in Los Angeles

I recently visited my colleagues in Los Angeles. He met me at LAX airport. We talked my legs late in the car, got in, and he started the engine. It's not at all the car for what you need like an insurance company of life. Finally, he said, "Did you'll put on your seat belt, we're here." I was surprised and didn't get to my seat belt. As he pointed out, he said, "I strongly support your seat belt law."

— *Tommy A. Smith*

A. State already has too many unenforceable laws

The state already has too many laws that are unenforceable. Our state legislature is already overburdened and it's not possible to have a seat belt law. The legislature is already overburdened and it's not possible to have a seat belt law.

— *David D. Olson*

A. Accidents have many 'ripple effects'

Some who object to a seat belt law in Alaska claim that such a law would violate the freedom of choice on matters of personal health and safety. Citizens are made that "I have the right to decide how safe or unsafe it may be to be."

Those who object to a seat belt law in Alaska claim that such a law would violate the freedom of choice on matters of personal health and safety. Citizens are made that "I have the right to decide how safe or unsafe it may be to be."

Those who object to a seat belt law in Alaska claim that such a law would violate the freedom of choice on matters of personal health and safety. Citizens are made that "I have the right to decide how safe or unsafe it may be to be."

— *John Doe*

A. We need laws that prevent accidents

Let's go back, another attempt to save lives and prevent injuries from automobile accidents. The law is great, but the way it's after the fact. People are killed and injured in millions of accidents. We need laws to prevent injuries.

Statistics show that 90 percent of all accidents can be prevented. What are we going to do about the fact? People are killed and injured in millions of accidents. We need laws to prevent injuries.

— *Phil Orr*

A. Seat belt law will save lives, limbs and dollars

Some people say that seat belt laws are unenforceable. They say they won't get into an accident. And some say that they say it's a matter of will. Whether they say they won't get into an accident, people say they won't get into an accident. People say they won't get into an accident. People say they won't get into an accident.

— *Cheryl Carter*
Emergency Med

A. We don't need any more unenforceable laws

Seat belts? I believe in them. In fact I never drive without mine. A law requiring that you wear a seat belt is a law requiring that you wear a seat belt. A law requiring that you wear a seat belt is a law requiring that you wear a seat belt.

— *Mary Johnson*
Teacher

A. State has right to try to reduce injuries, deaths

Alaska needs definitely to have a mandatory seat belt law. In my opinion the state has every right to attempt to reduce injuries and deaths through seat belt legislation.

— *John Doe*

A. Seat belts save lives, prevent injuries

Wearing a seat belt does save lives, prevent injuries, and cut down insurance rates for all drivers.

A seat belt is not uncomfortable as an airplane. It is the problem to get people to buckle up when they are up in the air.

— *Sam Chamber*

MISS JOHNSTON HAPPENS TO BE INCORPORATED. THE ALASKA SAFETY BELT USE COMMISSION IS A NON-PROFIT SAFETY ORGANIZATION THAT RECEIVES NO MONEY FROM THE STATE OF ALASKA. THE FACT IS IS THAT WE ARE TRYING TO SAVE LIVES AND MONEY.

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Frontierman
Palmer, Alaska

JAN 17 1966

As you see it

Would you support a mandatory seat belt law?



Roberta Custer, Wasilla:
Definitely. I won't let my kids ride without buckling up. You have a better chance to survive an accident if you wear a seatbelt.



Dale Helch, Wasilla: Yes, for safety. I've had friends that have been in accidents and gone through the windshield. That wouldn't have happened if they'd had a seatbelt on.



Bob Chamberlain, Wasilla:
Yes, especially for the safety of kids. Child car seats should be mandatory.



Rick Mehaffey, Wasilla: Yes. So many people die with all the drunk drivers around. Seatbelts are especially good for little kids—they have a whole life to live.

March 17, '86
Anchorage DAILY NEWS

Seat belt non-users hurt all

James D. Bennett objects to my suggestion that people who refuse to wear their seat belts when riding in automobiles should have to pay higher insurance rates. He apparently does not understand that those who do not wear seatbelts make everyone else's rates go up. Any insurance agent can explain why this is so.

It is patently unfair that I should have to pay higher rates because Mr. Bennett and people like him will not take the simple precaution of buckling up. Refusing to wear seat belts, contrary to popular belief, is not primarily a matter of personal choice. It is blatant irresponsibility which unjustifiably infringes on the rights of everyone else.

Kenneth Rowster

3-20-86 Anch. DAILY NEWS
Courts have upheld seat belt laws

Regarding the Feb. 28 letter written by James Bennett on seat belts, further elaboration on the facts involved in the Illinois case would perhaps be beneficial. A lower court in Illinois did rule the seat belt law unconstitutional. The judge who made this ruling is a former state legislator who voted against the seat belt bill when it was passed by the Illinois legislature in 1985. The decision is being appealed to the Illinois Supreme Court. We expect this court to reverse the decision of the lower court and uphold the seat belt law.

Other states with seat belt laws have faced similar litigations. In New York a decision of the Supreme Court entered summary judgment upholding the belt law. In December, the county court in Lancaster County, Nebraska, upheld Nebraska's seat belt use law against a similar challenge. The Nebraska court specifically ruled that the seat belt use law:

- Is a proper exercise of the state's police power.
- Does not deprive any fundamental right, liberty or freedom.
- Is not void for vagueness.
- Does not classify unreasonably or arbitrarily.
- Does not delegate legislative authority to the federal government.
- Does not violate any rights under either the Nebraska Constitution or the United States Constitution.

— Dennis DeWitt
Statewide chairman
Alaska Safety Belt Use Coalition

3/25/86

Seat belt law required courage

It is a welcome breath of legislative courage that brings us a mandatory seat belt law. It is time that Alaskans realize that while this may be the "last frontier," it is still a society. Everybody's actions, to some extent, affect everybody else. Is it fair that I should pay higher auto insurance rates because others up here insist upon driving irresponsibly? Is it fair that I should pay higher health insurance rates to subsidize those who consider it their right to not wear a seat belt and thereby suffer greater injuries if they are in an accident? Many of those who were recently so vocal in their concern about the leaking tanker might do well to ask themselves if there is really any difference, except in degree, between an irresponsible driver and a leaking tank car.

I would also like to know why insurance policies are not written that would void one's injury benefits if a seat belt was not being worn. It seems that would be a greater incentive than a paltry \$15 fine.

— S. Reilly Moss
Wasilla

Buckling up saves lives

In response to a letter from James D. Bennett about seat belt laws, I sure hope the gentleman has good health insurance if he ever should be in a car accident. How many people out there driving have no insurance whatsoever? Many can't afford it, I realize, but who pays for the hospital? We do. Time and time again many lives and injuries could have been saved if we had all buckled up. How long does it take to do that?

By the way, Mr. Bennett, you're lucky you live here in the good old U.S. of A. In Europe you *will* buckle up. Children are sitting in the backseats strapped in tight. I have seen people driving with little ones in their lap. How many innocent little ones get killed in cars every year because some people have no brain?

— Marianne Schreiber
Wasilla

ALASKA CLIPPING
SERVICE

Fairbanks
News Miner

MAY 29 1986

63 Wear seat belts

May 20, 1986
475 Halvorson Road
Fairbanks, AK 99709

To the Editor:

I am greatly disappointed that the mandatory seat belt law (CSHB224) failed to pass.

I am a paramedic and I work on a first response ambulance. Since 1976 I have not seen the death of a driver or a passenger wearing a seat belt. Those that have died were not wearing seat belts. It is also my experience that seat belts have not only saved lives but also they save occupants from facial disfiguring injuries, permanent handicaps and long-term hospitalization.

I believe that the legislators who voted against this bill should now talk to their local ambulance services and hospital emergency room staff before this bill is considered again. I was appalled only one of our local legislators supported this bill. I applaud Niilo Koponen for his support.

Wearing a seat belt should not be a personal choice. The unbelted driver is a hazard to others on the road. He cannot control his vehicle as well as a belted driver in emergency situations. I know this from a personal experience of rolling a vehicle while belted in. Thus

the unbelted driver can cause accidents that could otherwise be avoided. The injuries to the unbelted driver and passengers create costs to police and ambulance and medical services that are otherwise unnecessary. The expense of supporting a comatose auto victim for a period of years usually becomes a financial burden of the state and federal government.

I suggest that your readers read the accident reports in the newspaper and note the greater incident of injury to unbelted victims as compared to those that are belted.

Since the child auto seat belt law passed I have seen that the unbelted adults in an auto accident are the ones injured and, thankfully, the belted children (due to the law) escape without injury.

Wear your seat belt. I wouldn't drive across your parking lot without one on.

Donald A. Callahan

ent June 26th near Spaulding Leach condos, I feel I have to state my views also.

The 13-year-old girl in the rear seat is lucky to be alive, having been fortunate (?) enough to cannon-ball into the rear of the front seat, rather than through the front windshield as usually happens. She sustained head injuries and numerous bruises and contusions. She impacted the seat with enough force to tear the seat from its mountings in the frame. Her mother and step-father weren't so lucky. Her step-father struck the steering wheel, dash, and windshield with tremendous force, causing almost instantaneous death and massive internal and external injuries. Her mother, who had just been appointed to a judgeship in her hometown, also impacted the dash and windshield with equal force causing somewhat the same injuries with massive internal bleeding. Although they both showed some vital signs when first responding units arrived, the great amount of internal bleeding and numerous injuries resulted in their deaths. None of the three were wearing seat belts.

For me, it's not possible to describe the aftermath of a collision between a human body and the interior of a car and windshield. I was there, assisting where I could, doing what was asked of me, but a part of me wasn't there. You know, you see it, but your mind just doesn't accept it. It's later, when you sit and critique the response, discuss what was done, what could have been done, maybe what wasn't done, that it starts to sink in. That young girl's mother and

father are gone. Forever. The three to five seconds it takes to latch most automotive seat belts could have made a difference.

That accident stretched the borough's resources in men and equipment. As the people were removed and vital signs were extremely weak or non-existent, EMTs from Lynn Canal, Auke Bay, Glacier, and Juneau fire departments attempted to find and stabilize life signs. The young girl went off to the hospital in the first ambulance. Her mother was assigned to R-2, Glacier's ambulance; the father to R-1, Juneau's ambulance. It takes six to eight trained EMTs doing several different things almost simultaneously in an attempt to return life to a person who has no vital signs. Plus someone to drive the ambulance and someone on the radio relaying information to the hospital concerning the patient's condition. Luckily for Juneau, there is an abundance of people, both paid and volunteer, who put in a lot of time and effort to become EMTs and trained rescue personnel. Unfortunately, in this instance it was too late. A person can't help wondering if seat belts would have made any difference. Imagine, just three to five seconds.

While all this frantic effort was going on with the three casualties, the fourth victim, the lone driver of the second vehicle, was left in the driver's seat of his demolished car. He had stable vital signs, could converse with the EMTs and rescue personnel, and was able to assist us in removing him from the car. He walked to my pickup, as an ambulance

... lance wasn't needed for his minor injuries, and besides, they'd all left with the more seriously injured. Myself and an EMT transported him to Bartlett Memorial Hospital, where he walked into the emergency room. He had been wearing his seat belt. He repeated many times, "Boy, I'm glad I had my seat belt on." Three to five extra seconds and he walked away.

Jeff Pilcher,
Captain, Auke Bay
Volunteer Fire Department

ALASKA CLIPPING
SERVICE

Juneau Empire
Juneau, AK

JUL 1 1986

Three to five seconds
could have saved lives

Dear Editor:

There have been numerous letters and articles lately regarding the pros and cons of automotive seat belts, and the legislature getting into the act attempting to make it mandatory adds fuel to the fire. After the acci-



City/State /Alaska Life /Weather

B

Poll shows most favor seat belt law

By Debble Reinwand
Times Writer

Legislation requiring Alaskans to use seat belts while in their cars is favored by 65 percent of the state's residents, a poll shows, with strong support coming from rural regions and Southeast Alaska.

The survey, conducted by Marc Hellenthal, consists of interviews with 1,473 residents between Jan. 8 and 17. Samples were taken in all areas of the state, according to Hellenthal.

Rural residents topped the list of supporters of a safety belt law, with 77 percent of those polled for the measure. More than 74 percent of Southeast residents questioned favor the law, while 69 percent of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough respondents support it. In Anchorage, 65 percent of those polled want a seat belt law.

Other findings of the poll indicate bipartisan support for the measure, with 73 percent of Democrats surveyed in favor, 60 percent of Republicans polled saying they're for the measure and 65 percent of the indepen-

dents voicing support

The only staunch opposition to seat belt legislation came from the Libertarian Party, with 59 percent of those polled coming down against the proposal.

"This poll points to the fact that the Alaskan public wants to start saving lives, reducing injuries and saving money by adopting a safety-belt-use law," said Frank Bickford, executive director of the Alaska Safety Belt Use Coalition.

During the election, a majority of those seeking legislative seats said they favored a mandatory seat belt bill, and Gov. Steve Cowper is on record as a supporter of the measure.

A bill requiring seat belt use is expected to be introduced in the legislature in mid-February, and already lawmakers are being lobbied on the issue.

During the opening week of the 1987 session, a group of children dressed as clowns visited the Capitol to deliver heart-shaped pins to Alaska's 60 legislators. A message on the pins said, "Seat belt laws save lives."

Seat belt law campaign begins in Eagle River

Bob Nestle has been named as the coordinator for the Alaska Safety Belt Use Coalition in Eagle River.

The coalition is backing a mandatory seat belt law for Alaska in 1987.

Nestle has been in the insurance business for 35 years as an insurance broker, and is currently a member of the Anchorage Crime Commission and past member of the Anchorage Alcohol Abuse Commission.

Nestle believes that a mandatory seat belt law in Alaska will save lives, injuries and money, saying that it has been proven to work in the 26 states that now have seat belt laws. He said that among the states with the longest experience with safety belt laws — Illinois, Michigan, Texas, New Jersey, New York and Nebraska — the number of fatalities has gone down from 10 to 26 percent.

Anyone interested in helping the coalition in Eagle River should contact Nestle at 694-4372.

Better and better, every day

Accident past, Barbara Mandrell looks toward the future — and Alaska

By DONNA FREEDMAN
Daily News Weekend editor

After Sept. 11, 1984, when a car crossed the center lane and smashed her head-on, nothing was the same for country singer Barbara Mandrell. It wasn't just the pain, or the fear for the son and daughter who were also in her car, or the operations and therapy that followed the accident. It was the physical and emotional upheavals of her head injury that made daily life a trial.

Mandrell, once an avid reader, found she didn't care to open any of her books any more. The TV star and winner of numerous music awards discovered she'd forgotten the words to all her songs. Getting in an automobile still terrifies her, and she is unable to drive.

"Every day was hard to face — every day," says Mandrell, who performs in Anchorage on Monday. What kept her going, what buoyed her up in addition to the love and support of her family, was the way her fans rallied around her. Cards, letters, flowers streamed to her suburban Nashville home; Mandrell was later told by the postal service that they'd never handled such a heavy volume of mail for one person.

And she was grateful. "I knew how much I loved my fans, but I never knew how much they loved me," she says, the tremble in her voice audible even over the long-distance wire. "I'm just very grateful to them."

She's showing her gratitude the best way she can: by singing. Mandrell embarked on a two-month, 49-show tour of America at the end of August. "Both coasts, and also the middle," is the way she describes it, including dates in New York, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Ohio, Idaho, Montana, Oregon and California.

And Alaska, the only state in the U.S. she hasn't yet visited. "With 30 foreign countries, I sure enough want to take care of my own home country," Mandrell says. "My husband and my older son have been on a trip to see Alaska and they loved it so much . . . It's going to be a real adventure."

Bit by bit, Mandrell's physical condition continues to improve. Her last operation, to remove a metal rod from her leg, took place six weeks ago. She's starting to be able to read a little again. And right after she completes this tour, she goes into rehearsal for a Christmas TV special that also stars her sisters, Louise and Laryne, and their combined families.

Family ties, always important to her, are now her main priority. "I've always tried to make my family and my career number one both," she says. "But since my accident my family is number one, period." She's bringing her youngest, 1-year-old Nathaniel, on a road trip. Her two older children are in school, so Mandrell has arranged for two visits home along the way, and her husband has been able to join her twice on the road.

And now that she's up and around, she's added a third career: seat-belt spokeswoman.

My husband and my older son have been on a trip to see Alaska and they loved it so much . . . It's going to be a real adventure. ♪

— Barbara Mandrell

Mandrell was never a seat belt user in the past. "I was one of those people who would be saying 'Nobody's business' to tell me to wear a seat belt."

Then one day, while driving in Hendersonville, Tenn., Mandrell saw a station wagon, full of children, with its tailgate down. Something told her to put her seat belt on; she did, and told her own kids to buckle up.

Fifteen minutes later, her car was demolished.

"Now people can think what they want, but I happen to know that it was God's will that I am alive today and that my children are alive," she says. "Experts from the scene of the accident and doctors told me we were supposed to be dead."

She made a public service announcement about seat belts, and spoke before a legislative committee in Tennessee. Before that, she'd never taken a public stand on any issues before; at first, she was a little unsure about this one. So she asked her son, Matthew, what he thought about seat belts.

"He said, 'I don't think about them . . . without one, I'd be dead,'" Mandrell recounts. That decided it. She knew that some people would rather listen to their favorite performer than all the highway experts in the world; as for the others, well, she'll have her say regardless.

"I'm sorry if people don't want to hear about this, but I'll talk only because I am alive," Mandrell says. She doesn't bring the subject up herself, but she knows she's made a difference: "Once in a while it's brought to my attention people whose lives were saved because of seat belts, and they were wearing seat belts because of me."

Having said this, she changes the subject again: Alaska is what's on her mind these days. "I'm excited about performing for people that live in Alaska. I have vivid and wonderful memories of audiences and their responsiveness and their hospitality, but I have no earthly idea what to expect (in Anchorage)."

Alaska, and football. "When I finish this tour, on Halloween, I'll get to see my son play football," Mandrell says. "I've missed his whole season so far."



Among her other activities, Mandrell has become a vocal advocate for seat-belt use.

■ THE BARBARA MANDRELL SHOW is presented 8 p.m. Monday at Sullivan Arena. Opening act is The Arizona Outlaws. Tickets are \$18 and \$20, plus outlet fee, available at All Budget Tapes and Records, Ticket Inc., the Eganoff Recreation Center and the arena box office. (258-7915)

ALASKA CLIPPING
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Anchorage Times
Anchorage, AK

AUG 24 1988

← FRONT PAGE OF Election
Section

Seatbelt law gets split vote

A little more than half of the candidates in Tuesday's primary oppose a mandatory seatbelt law, according to an Anchorage Times survey.

Of 61 candidates for governor, lieutenant governor and the state legislature, 26 favored a law requiring adults to wear seatbelts, 31 were opposed and four were undecided.

Only candidates running for Anchorage-area legislative seats were included in the survey.

Opinions on such a law were not divided by political lines.

Among top candidates for governor, Republicans Arliss Sturgulewski, Joe Hayes, and Walter Hickel favor a mandatory seatbelt law while Bob Richards and Dick Randolph are opposed. Democrat contender Steve Cowper favors a seatbelt law while incumbent Gov. Bill Sheffield does not.

— WON Republican Nomination

— WON Democratic Nomination

Many of those who are opposed to such a law said auto safety laws exist for the protection of children and should not be extended to adults.

"We have enough of a big brother watching over us," Richards said. "Child safety is already accommodated under the existing law."

Hayes argued the other side.

"While I prefer as little government intrusion into our lives as possible, wearing seat belts can protect other drivers as well as the one wearing the belt," Hayes said. "It lessens the chance of losing control of a vehicle by being thrown from a driver's seat following a collision."

Another argument in favor of the law was that it would reduce insurance costs.

Mandatory seat belt bill squeaks through House

3-13-86 DAILY NEWS PENINSULA CLARION

JUNEAU (AP) — Alaska drivers would be required to wear seat belts, under a measure that narrowly passed the House Wednesday.

The so-called "mandatory seat belt law" was approved — after lengthy debate — by a 22-to-16 vote. At least 21 votes are needed to pass a measure in the House.

The proposal is likely to come up for more debate before being sent to the Senate, where substantial opposition is expected.

During debate on the measure, some legislators argued that government should do all it can to protect people. Others, however, said the proposal attacks the right to personal freedom.

"This law will result in more people buckling up," said Rep. Mike Miller, a Juneau Democrat who sponsored the bill. "If we pass this law, there will be more people alive at this time next year that would otherwise be dead."

Miller said 85 people — not counting pedestrians — died in traffic accidents in Alaska

last year. Seventy-nine did not wear seat belts, he said.

Still, some lawmakers argued that such decisions should be left to personal choice, not mandated by the state. Rep. Andre Marrou, L-Homer, asked if government should attempt to regulate everything considered dangerous to a person's health.

"Obesity is unhealthy," he said. "Why don't we require people to get weighed once a week, just like trucks?"

Miller's proposal requires drivers to buckle up

whenever in a vehicle, unless the vehicle does not have seat belts. It would be against the law to remove seat belts from a vehicle, however.

People who deliver newspapers or mail from inside their vehicles would be exempt from the law, as would passengers in a school bus or emergency vehicle.

Miller said the law would be enforced when troopers or police are performing other duties. For example, a driver stopped for speeding would also be cited if he or

she is not buckled up.

"This law is not going to be so strictly enforced so we have seat belt patrols," Miller said.

If convicted for the first time, a driver would face a \$15 fine and the addition of demerits to his or her driving record.

The proposal does not affect the child-restraint law already in place in Alaska. That statute makes it a crime to transport infants or small children in a vehicle without a proper child-restraint seat or seat belt.

20-20 deadlock in state House defeats mandatory seatbelt measure

By BRUCE SCANDLING
The Associated Press

JUNEAU — A proposal to make seatbelt use mandatory in Alaska died on the House floor Tuesday, despite arguments that such a law would save lives.

"People will die for the lack of this bill passing," said Rep. Mike Miller, a Juneau Democrat who sponsored the measure.

Minutes later, his proposal was defeated on a 20-20 tally. At least 21 votes are needed for a bill to pass the 40-

member House.

The vote apparently signals the end of efforts this year to push a mandatory seatbelt law through the legislature, said Dennis DeWitt, chairman of the Alaska Safety Belt Use Coalition.

"Obviously, we're still committed to it," DeWitt said. "We'll be back next year."

Opponents of the legislation (CSHB224) said they believe the use of seatbelts is a personal decision which should not be required by

government.

"It is a law that obstructs freedom and personal choice," said Rep. Al Adams, D-Kotzebue. "Voting for something like this is questioning the common sense of our constituents."

Homer Libertarian Andre Marrou said people who don't wear seatbelts are dumb. But he spoke against the measure.

"It is nothing more or nothing less than coercive dogoodism," he said.

Marrou said state government, if allowed to expand whenever new laws or regulations are proposed, would go too far in trying to protect citizens against their own right to make decisions.

"What comes next, slippery-bathtub inspectors?" he asked.

Tuesday's vote was Miller's second attempt to push the measure through the House. It passed in early March by a 22-16 margin, but was brought

up the next day for a reconsideration vote.

Apparently concerned that the measure wouldn't win approval again, Miller asked to return the measure to committee for more work.

Four House lawmakers who voted for the measure in March voted against it Tuesday. They are Reps. H.A. "Red" Boucher, D-Anchorage; Drue Pearce, R-Anchorage; Robin Taylor, R-Wrangell; and House Speaker Ben Grusendorf, D-Sitka.

JUN 9 1986



BUCKLED IN—Steve Frith of Fairbanks was awarded a "Saved By The Belt" certificate in Anchorage because he survived a car collision with a moose by wearing his seat belt.

Ludwig Laab photo

Seat belt club bears witness

Steve Frith of Fairbanks survived a close encounter with a moose this spring because he was wearing a seat belt.

For that reason, he was awarded a "Saved By The Belt" certificate in Anchorage recently, according to a press release. Frith and Robin Bissy of Wasilla were the first people in the state given the awards, which are handed out by a club formed by the Alaska Council on Prevention of Alcohol and Drug Abuse, the Alaska Highway Safety Planning Agency, and the Alaska Safety Belt Use Coalition.

Frith's accident occurred the evening of April 12, when he was driving past University Avenue on Atlanta Street, going about 30 miles per hour. A moose darted

out in front of the car. Frith didn't see it and didn't hit the brake until after the moose crashed in. By the time he did brake the car, the moose fell off the roof. Glass scattered on the inside of the car, and the roof was crushed.

"If I hadn't had my seat belt on I would have been mush," Frith said. "I would have been through the windshield."

Frith walked away from the accident with no injuries.

Robin Bisse was severely injured in an auto accident Feb. 26 in Wasilla, but she believes she would have been killed if she hadn't been wearing a seat belt. As it was, she sustained a fractured jaw, lacerated eyes, severed lower lip, crushed nerves, face bruises and more.

She has since recovered from the accident.

According to Frank Bickford, director of the Alaska Safety Belt Use Coalition, only one out of five people use their safety belts. The "Saved By the Belt" club's goal is to improve that ratio.

Motorists who have ever escaped death or serious injury in a traffic accident by wearing safety belts are eligible to become members. Children too young to wear belts may qualify if they escaped death or serious injury in a traffic accident by riding in a child safety seat. The club is free, and anyone can apply to the club by contacting Beth Lauesen of the Fairbanks Child Passenger Safety Association at 456-6935.

MY TURN — In support of a mandatory seat belt use law

By Frank Richford

Two serious accidents occurred over this past Memorial Day weekend. One accident occurred on mile 119 of the Sterling Highway near Clam Gulch. One family member was lost in that accident. That person, the driver, was not wearing a seat belt. Four other family members were wearing seat belts and received only minor injuries. The other accident occurred near mile 60 on the Parks Highway south of Houston when a car spun out of control and rolled over. The driver, who was killed, was not wearing a seat belt. The passenger was wearing a seat belt, is alive, and listed in fair condition. These tragedies are real and immediate and lasting for the families and friends of victims. But they don't have to be and should not be.

Those who died were fellow Alaskans. Statistics show that a minimum of 20 to 50 lives can be saved in Alaska if a mandatory seat belt law is enacted, as well as 700 fewer injuries and a savings of \$12 million in medical cost insurance and legal expenses, lost production and human capital costs.

Dramatic evidence from states and nations that have enacted a law shows that lives are being saved. There are now 23 states with mandatory seat belt laws. Among the six states with the longest experience with safety belt laws — Illinois, Michigan, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York and Texas — decreases in fatalities range from 10 to 24 percent. State police in Michigan recently reported the first weekend without a traffic fatality in 10 years — more than 500 weekends. It is a clear fact. Seat belt laws are saving lives.

Every year, more than 40,000 people are killed in traffic crashes and more than 300,000 people suffer serious injuries. The U.S. Department of Transportation estimates that if there were a 70 percent belt-usage rate throughout the United States, more than 9,000 lives would be saved each year.

According to the Alaska Highway Safety Planning Agency, 124 traffic fatalities occurred last year in Alaska. At least 79 of those killed were not wearing seat belts; only six fatalities were wearing seat belts. Four of the six wearing seat belts were killed in tractor trailer accidents. The remaining fatalities were pedestrians, motorcyclists and bicyclists, according to the Alaska State Troopers. Alcohol and not wearing seat belts remain the biggest factors in fatal accidents.

In addition to the safety factor seat belt laws are cost effective. Studies show that for every dollar invested in safety belt use, the state saves \$17.50. Safety belts can reduce traffic fatalities, which are eight times as expensive to investigate as non-injury accidents. Officers would have more time to concentrate on other traffic enforcement programs.

Opponents of a mandatory seat belt law state

that driving a motor vehicle is a right, not a privilege. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Operation of a motor vehicle is subject to many restrictions: among them are stopping at red lights and stop signs, obeying other traffic signals, driving at a speed determined to be safe, maintaining safety equipment in working order, and having liability insurance — restrictions considered by the courts to be legitimate exercises in governmental authority.

Opponents may argue that seat belt use is up to the individual. That individual rights argument becomes irrelevant once we recognize that refusing to buckle up endangers innocent third parties — not only the dependent children of those who insist on not buckling, and not only those who end up paying higher taxes so that others may enjoy the "freedom" not to buckle, but also those who end up being injured or even killed in avoidable collisions when unbuckled drivers lose control of their cars.

Quite simply, the seat belt law prevents people from becoming loose objects when a car skids or veers into a tree or another vehicle; a belted driver is less likely to become a helpless spectator as his car becomes an unguided missile. Surely that is a

legitimate exercise of society's power to protect the innocent, not the entering wedge of tyranny.

We must be concerned by unnecessary encroachment on civil liberties, but I believe that mandatory seat belt legislation will be carefully crafted to minimize any intrusion or potential for harassment. The importance of the goal of the legislation is saving lives.

A proposal to make seat belt use mandatory in Alaska failed this year in the House of Representatives on a reconsideration vote. The tally was 20 For and 20 Against. The Proposal passed in early March by a 22-14 margin, but later it was brought up for reconsideration.

The closeness of the vote on the seat belt bill along with the substantial public approval (Hellenthal Poll — 66 percent in favor of a law and only 21.5 percent against) signals the fact that we along with many Alaskans are committed to be back next year to support this important piece of legislation.

Unfortunately, the State of Alaska will continue to see people die unnecessarily on our streets and highways because of the failure to buckle up. We can change this; we can encourage our legislators to accept their responsibility to pass mandatory seat belt use legislation. That will save dollars and more importantly, lives.

This column appeared in all papers in Alaska.



2 state health, safety groups join safety belt group's new program

Times staff

Anchorage Times/June 28, '86

Two groups that promote health and safety have joined with the Alaska Safety Belt Use Coalition in a program to recognize people whose lives were "Saved by the Belt."

Other sponsors are the Alaska Council on Prevention of Alcohol and Drug Abuse and the Alaska Highway Safety Planning Agency.

Robin Bissy, of Wasilla, and Steve Frith, of Fairbanks, have

received the first certificates at the formation of a "Saved by the Belt" club in Anchorage.

Frith collided with a moose on April 12, 1986, on Atlanta Street.

"If I hadn't had my seat belt on I would have been mush," he said. "I would have been thrown through the windshield."

Instead, he walked away from the accident with no injuries, he said.

Although seriously injured about the face, Bissy said she

was saved by the seat belt she was wearing during an accident on Bogard Road in Wasilla on Feb. 26, 1985.

Frank Bickford, director of the Alaska Safety Belt Use Coalition, said the group plans to promote wearing of seat belts because, he said, they work.

Bickford said motorists who have escaped death or serious injury because they were wearing a seat belt are eligible to become members of the club.

Unheeded seat belt brings life to a crashing end

FAIRBANKS DAILY NEWS MINER

JUNE 30, 1986

ON THE NIGHT before she died, Deboerah Williams went shopping with friends in downtown Fairbanks. Deboerah, a vivacious 35-year-old, had a knack for picking out clothes for herself and friends.

As they left to go to Nordstrom's, driver Fawn Helms insisted that Deboerah put on a seat belt.

Deboerah didn't see the pressing need for seat belts. She had the attitude that accidents are something that happen to other people.

But the ignition key wasn't going to be turned, Fawn told her friend, until she buckled up.

"We sat there for about 10 minutes," Fawn said. "I wouldn't move my car until she finally put hers on. The next day I knew right when I heard about the accident that she hadn't been wearing her seat belt."

HER FRIENDS REMEMBER Deboerah as a bright young woman who loved red roses, shopping, and being with other people. She brought a light touch to her job in the clerk's office at the borough.

Not long ago Deboerah warned Assemblyman Joe Sitton that if he kept refusing to get



DEBOERAH WILLIAMS
Friend knew why

a picture of himself taken, she would put a photo of Mickey Mouse in Sitton's assigned place outside the borough assembly chambers where the portraits of elected leaders are displayed. Of course she was smiling as she said it.

The Rev. Samuel Banks described it as her "million-dollar smile." In an eloquent memorial service on a sunny Friday afternoon, he told the mourners that Deboerah remains a source of inspiration.

"This old friend is only a smile away," he said.

She came here with the U.S. Army in 1961 and touched the lives of many in the past five years, as evidenced by the 100 people who crowded the Corinthian Baptist Church in her honor.

"Even when she was talking to you she was laughing," said friend and co-worker Esther Cunningham.

"Someone made the comment that all of Deboerah's relatives live in Indianapolis, but others disagreed. "Her friends are her family," said Borough Clerk Mona Drexler.

They said Deboerah had accomplished all of her goals except one—she wanted to open a men's wear store some day. She had taken night courses at the community college and recently bought her first bike—a 13 speed she got to ride to work one time.

ON THE MORNING of Saturday June 21 at 7:20 a.m., Deboerah was driving toward town from North Pole in her 1982 Mazda, obeying the 35 mph speed limit.

Alaska State Trooper Jeff Slamin said the tire tracks showed her car headed onto the shoulder

at an slight angle. He believes that she was tired and didn't realize the car was drifting off the road.

When she became alert, Slamin thinks, she turned sharply back toward the road. The car was going too fast, however, and the tires dug in and the car spun out and flipped over.

Witnesses said it happened in an instant. All they saw was a cloud of dust at a little Richardson Highway and an overturned car.

Deboerah was not wearing a seat belt and the car's violent motion threw her out a window. The vehicle hit the ground three or four times and she landed about 100 feet beyond it, Slamin said.

A North Pole ambulance took her to Fairbanks Memorial Hospital and she was admitted with severe head injuries.

She died the next day, but not, the Rev. Banks said, until after Sunday services had started in the Corinthian Baptist Church a half-mile away.

THE SADDEST WORDS in the language are "It might have been."

Had Deboerah been wearing a seat belt, Trooper Slamin said, she might have escaped the accident with nothing more serious

Dermot Cole

Hometown Reporter



than a few scratches. "I believe she would have come out of it with minor injuries at the worst," he said.

Seat belts don't guarantee that you won't die in a traffic wreck, but the statistics say you are 25 times more likely to be killed if you get thrown out of a vehicle during an accident.

At the memorial service last week, Deboerah's friend Fawn, the 24-year-old daughter of Borough Mayor Juanita Helms, held back her tears and said she had been wrong to think that it was none of her business to try hard to get others to use seat belts.

Fawn said by wearing a seat belt you not only make driving safer, you protect your friends and family by reducing the chances that you'll put them through the kind of torture that goes with the death of a loved one.

Deboerah's friends have asked that contributions in her memory be made to the Fairbanks Child Passenger Safety Assn. The organization promotes the use of seat belts and child restraints. The address is Box 84243, Fairbanks, AK 99708.

"We felt that it would be more of a contribution in her memory if it would help other people to realize that they should wear their seat belts," Mona said.

EVERYONE ON THE ASSEMBLY took a moment at last Thursday's meeting to remember what Deboerah had meant to them.

Former principal Ed Shellinger recalled a song he knew as a youth, "Jesus Wants Me For A Sunbeam."

"When I think of Deboerah, what a beautiful candidate the good Lord has," he said.

Army now requires soldiers to wear seatbelts off of base



FORT RICHARDSON — In war, the Army does its utmost to ensure soldier survival. Increasingly, efforts are being undertaken to see that soldiers in peacetime are not harmed by unsafe practices that can hurt them impair the Army's readiness.

The recent crackdowns on alcohol abuse and smoking are evidence of this concern. Steps are now being taken to protect soldiers and their families when they drive or ride personal cars, trucks or motorcycles.

Effective July 2, all soldiers in Alaska must wear seatbelts in vehicles equipped with them, both on and off post. Previously, the regulation did not address soldiers riding in vehicles off the military reservation.

The new policy, directed by Maj. Gen. Gerald H. Bethke, commander of the 6th Infantry (Light), also requires soldiers operating or riding on motorcycles to wear helmets and eye protection on and off post.

Bill Sweat, division safety director, says the new policy reflects concern from the divi-

sion's higher headquarters, U.S. Army Forces Command. Studies by Forces Command have revealed that between October 1985 and March 1986, 61 soldiers were killed and 407 injured in personal vehicle accidents. In Alaska during the last five years, Sweat said, soldier killed in accidents were not wearing seatbelts or a helmet when they had their fatal accident.

Under the new policy, family members and civilian employees must comply with the rules while on post. However, officials encourage everyone to "buckle up" every time they step into a car. Civilian employees must also abide by it when they are on official business away from the military reservation.

In accordance with state law, children must be in an approved restraint device if they are age 3 and under. They must wear a seatbelt if they are between the ages of 4 and 7.

Sweat says the new regulation is all part of the Army's motto of "taking care of its own."

Metro Sunday

Anchorage Daily News Sunday, August 24, 1986

Deboreah Williams: a tragedy that didn't have to happen

Deboreah Williams most assuredly never expected to be part of a booth at the Alaska State Fair.

She came north as a member of the United States Army and, when her hitch was up, decided to stay rather than return home to Indianapolis. She got a job in the clerk's office of the Fairbanks North Star Borough, and won friends with her fun-loving, thoughtful personality.

She was 35 years old when she died, nine weeks ago today.

Deboreah's friend, Faun Helms, remembers the night before Deboreah died. They spent the evening shopping at the Nordstrom store -- once they got going.

Faun, the daughter of Borough Mayor Juanita Helms, has this thing about seat belts. If you ride in her car, you have to wear one. It comes from being "harrassed" into the habit by her aunt.

"I have a standing policy that everybody in my car has to use seat belts. Usually, she'd buckle up and not give me any hassles, but every once in a while because of her disease, she would. That night, she was really stubborn about it."

Deboreah's disease was lupus, a painful inflammatory illness that can affect the skin,



suzan nightingale

joints and nervous system. When Deboreah's was acting up, it could make her whole body ache. But, lately, she'd gotten her medication regulated and the lupus had seemed under control. Deboreah had even started to exercise and lose the weight the medicine helped put on.

Although Deboreah claimed her lupus would make buckling up in Helms' car too uncomfortable, Helms was adamant. Because Deboreah's condition had improved, Helms suspected the lupus was an excuse.

"We just sat there and sat there, and I said, 'You know I'm not going until you buckle up.'"

"Finally, she did. Finally, buckling and

puffing, she buckled up."

That over with, the friends enjoyed an evening of shopping and socializing. The last time Helms saw Deboreah was around midnight Saturday when she dropped her off at home.

You've probably figured out how this story ends by now. The next morning, Deboreah Williams climbed in her Mazda to drive an old boyfriend, Broderick Grant, to work near North Pole. And she didn't buckle her seat belt.

"Apparently she was really tired and fell asleep and the car drifted off the road," said Helms. "The police say she probably woke up and jerked the car over and that made it flip. She was thrown from the car."

Grant wasn't in the car; the 7 a.m. accident took place after she'd dropped him off at work.

"They said that she would have probably only had a couple of scratches," said Helms -- if, of course, she'd been wearing her seatbelt.

Deboreah Williams never regained consciousness. She died the next day. And that's how Deboreah Williams became a statistic. One of the ones who could have walked away if only they'd buckled up.

According to the Alaska Seatbelt Coalition,

83 Alaskans died in automobile accidents in 1985; 79 of them were unbelted. And of the six that were wearing seatbelts, four were in accidents with large tractor-trailer rigs, making survival unlikely regardless. The coalition estimates that if Alaska passed a mandatory seatbelt law, between 20 and 50 lives a year would be saved, there'd be 700 fewer traffic injuries, and Alaskans would save \$12 million annually in legal, medical and lost worker costs.

And so, although it's not exactly the stuff of cotton candy and corn dogs, the coalition has a booth at the Alaska State Fair this year, and the story of Deboreah Williams is a small part of it.

"She was just a very cheerful person, always kidding around, pretty much always happy and trying to make other people happy," said Helms. "I never really said anything to her like, 'You should buckle up in your car,' because I figured it was her business if she buckled up in her car."

And how does she feel about the booth, and the clippings about Deboreah being a part of it? "I hope it does some good."

□ Suzan Nightingale is a Daily News columnist.

OCT 21 1985

Good idea to buckle up

Alaskans often are their own worst enemies when it comes to living long and healthy lives. Gov. Bill Sheffield has an idea for changing that, at least for state employees who drive on the job. He's directed them to wear seat-belts when riding in state cars.

A leading cause of death and injury, especially for younger Alaskans, is accidents, including automobile crashes. It's easy to cut the risk of harm in car wrecks by wearing seat belts. But more than half of Alaskans almost never buckle up.

Gov. Sheffield's order should help reduce injuries to state workers and cut the state's costs for employee absences and worker compensation claims. State employees should certainly buckle up — and so should other Alaskans.

ALASKA CLIPPING
SERVICE

Anchorage Times
Anchorage, AK

OCT 22 1985

Alaska briefs

City drivers buckle up

Anchorage drivers buckle their seat belts more than drivers in other parts of the nation, the Alaska Department of Highway Safety Planning Agency says.

A recent survey indicated 48.6 percent of Anchorage's drivers and 38.4 percent of its front seat passengers use seat belts, the agency said.

Director Mike Lewis seat belt use among drivers across the nation averages 15 to 18 percent where such use is voluntary.

The survey was conducted by University of Alaska-Anchorage professor Bob McKnight, in conjunction with a similar study on the use of child restraints in cars.

Another survey, commis-

sioned by the Alaska Safety Belt Use Coalition, shows that two-thirds of the Alaskans polled would favor legislation requiring seat belt use. The group is urging such legislation during the next session.

Drivers buckle up more

Alaska rates high in seat belt use

Anchorage drivers buckle up more than drivers in other parts of the nation, and motorists statewide say a mandatory seat belt law would suit them fine, according to a recent state study and a poll taken for a seat belt lobbying group.

The Alaska Department of Public Safety's Highway Safety Planning Agency reported earlier this month that 48.6 percent of Anchorage drivers and 38.4 percent of their front seat passengers use seat belts, agency director Mike Lewis said.

Across the nation, seat belt use among drivers where use is voluntary averages 15 to 18 percent, Lewis said.

The survey was done by University of Alaska-Anchorage professor Bob McKnight in conjunction with a similar study on the use of child restraints in cars.

Information for the study was gathered by observers who watched motorists in shopping malls.

The state's new child restraint law, which took effect June 8, may have had some influence on city drivers, Lewis said. He added that the state also has been pushing an education campaign explaining the virtues of seat belt use.

Two-thirds of Alaskans also said they would support legislation requiring seat belt use, according to a poll conducted recently by Hellenthal and Associates. The poll was commissioned by the Alaska Safety Belt Use Coalition, a lobbying group that will urge passage of such a bill during next year's legislative session.

The poll was taken among 508 Alaska adults. Support was greatest in rural areas of the state, where 78 percent said they would support the law. Southeast respondents backed the law by 69 percent, while just more than half of those in the Fairbanks area liked the proposal.

OCT 24 1985

Lawmaker sure seat belt bill to be expedited in '86

JUNEAU (AP)—A mandatory seat belt bill that calls for fines of up to \$15 against people who fail to buckle up while their vehicles are in motion will get quick action in the House next year, Rep. Mike Miller said Wednesday.

Miller, D-Juneau and chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, introduced the measure (CSHB 224) last session.

"It made it as far as the Rules Committee, and it's awaiting placement on the calendar," Miller said. "I think almost every passing week, the wisdom of the law becomes more apparent to people.

"It's a good lifesaving way to go. It's that simple," he said. "But we're getting some static from a small but vocal group of people who view the bill as a threat to their personal freedom. But I'm surprised at how small that group has been."

Proponents argue the law would save scores of lives annually, as well as hundreds of thousands of

dollars in lost wages and health care costs.

But opponents contend such a law would violate their individual rights. While some of the critics indicate they wouldn't mind wearing seat belts, they would resent the state telling them to do so.

The bill would exempt school bus passengers, the owners of cars not originally equipped with seat belts and certain handicapped people, Miller said.

"The school bus thing is a hot issue," he said. "If it (belts in buses) makes sense, let's do it on a separate bill. If not, let's not do it."

State law requires that children under the age of seven wear seat belts or ride in a suitable restraint device. That would go unchanged in Miller's bill.

Alaska would become the 18th state with a mandatory seat belt law if Miller's efforts are successful.

ALASKA CLIPPING SERVICE

Ketchikan Daily News
Ketchikan, AK

OCT 24 1985

Miller pushes belt bill

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ALASKA CLIPPING SERVICE

Chugiak-Eagle River Star
Eagle River, AK

OCT 24 1985

63 Sheffield orders state workers to drive with seatbelts

State employees driving on official government business must wear seat belts under an order signed by Gov. Bill Sheffield. The order also applies to passengers in state vehicles.

Sheffield noted that 57 state employees were injured during the past two years while driving on state business. Some of those injuries could have been prevented or lessened by the use of seat belts, he said.

"Beyond the safety of our workers, I'm also concerned about lost employee time and worker compensation payments being kept to a minimum," the governor said.

Sheffield commented that he now routinely wears a safety belt while driving or riding in a car.

"I didn't like wearing the belt at first, but I've learned to do it and it doesn't hurt a bit," he said.



Editorial

ALASKA CLIPPING SERVICE

HOMER NEWS

OCT 31 1985

State workers ordered to belt up on business

Gov. Bill Sheffield has signed an order requiring state employees to wear seatbelts while driving on official government business, according to a state news release. The administrative order, which also applies to passengers in state vehicles, is effective immediately.

"Surveys indicate that less than one-third of Alaskans routinely wear safety belts. To the extent state employees contribute to this figure, this order should reduce injuries," Gov. Sheffield said.

The order instructs all agencies under the governor's direction to develop and implement a policy for the use of seatbelts by their employees. It requires workers to attest to having

read and understood the order.

Gov. Sheffield noted that 57 state employees were injured during the past two years while driving on state business, and some of those injuries could have been prevented or lessened by the use of seatbelts.

"Beyond the safety of our workers, I'm also concerned that lost employee time and workers' compensation payments be kept to a minimum," the governor said.

Gov. Sheffield said he now routinely wears a safety belt while driving or riding in a car.

"I didn't like wearing the belt at first, but I've learned to do it and it doesn't hurt a bit," he said.

OCT-27-85
Anchorage Times

A life-saving habit

AMONG THE BILLS we expect to see passed by the 1986 legislature — and probably one that will breeze through with reasonable speed — is a pending measure that would make it illegal to drive in Alaska without seatbelts buckled.

Of course there are problems with the legislation. It rightfully can be viewed as one more erosion of individual freedom and you can expect to hear that argument a million times as the bill is debated.

IT WILL BE difficult to enforce, others will contend. They'll be right. The bill will be opposed on grounds that this may make sense for urban Alaska — for Anchorage and Fairbanks and Juneau and Ketchikan — but makes no sense for Craig or Hydaburg or Bethel or Barrow. There may be some validity to that argument, too.

Despite all that, the bill by

Rep. Mike Miller of Juneau makes sense and should be enacted into law.

The evidence of national statistics is overwhelming in support of mandatory seat-belt laws, which already are in effect in 17 states across the nation. Locally, seat belt use is mandatory for vehicles operated on Elmendorf Air Force Base and Fort Richardson.

IF YOU DON'T believe statistics, talk sometime to one of the doctors or nurses who work in the emergency rooms of hospitals hereabouts. They're believers. They see the gruesome results of not buckling up and they see the lucky ones who remembered to use their belts.

The inconvenience is nil once the habit has been acquired. It's simply no big deal — except that it may make the difference between life and death. That is a big deal.

Seat belt coalition wants Alaskans to start buckling up

by Paul Fattig
Times Writer

A simple click could have saved at least 20 lives, prevented some 700 injuries and saved taxpayers some \$12 million in Alaska last year.

The non-profit Alaska Safety Belt Use Coalition hopes those figures will alert those who don't buckle up when they hop into their vehicles.

"Basically, what we're doing is an education campaign, making sure Alaskans know why it is important to wear seat belts," says Frank Bickford, the coalition's statewide coordinator. "The advantages, of course, are that it protects you in accidents. You are less likely to be killed or injured."

The national Highway Users Federation, a non-profit group supporting safer highways, studied Alaskan highway deaths last year and made the conservative estimate that at least 20 lives could have been saved and 700 injuries prevented had vehicle occupants been wearing seat belts.

The \$12 million came out of the state pocketbook to help pay medical, insurance and related costs, Bickford notes.

The coalition, chaired by Dennis DeWitt of Juneau, has received \$250,000 from the national Traffic Safety Now organization for its educational campaign.

But Carol Lewis of Anchor-

Ovations

age, the coalition's southcentral chairwoman, notes there is another goal beyond educating the public about the use of seat belts.

"Getting a mandatory seat belt law is the ultimate goal," she says.

If the bill introduced by Rep. Mike Miller, D-Juneau, becomes law, Alaska will become the 18th state with a mandatory seat belt law. However, an exemption would be made for school bus passengers, certain handicapped people and the owners of cars not originally equipped with seat belts.

Alaskan pollster Marc Hellenenthal, hired by the coalition to determine how Alaskans feel about the proposed law, reports that 66 percent statewide support it, Lewis says.

A report released by the Alaska Department of Public Safety's Highway Safety Planning Agency late in October indicates that 48.6 percent of Anchorage drivers buckle up, while 38.4 percent of front seat passengers use seat belts.

That compares to about 15-18 percent voluntary seat belt use nationwide, the agency notes.

The coalition has three subcommittees, all of which welcome any assistance, Lewis says.

The resources development subcommittee, headed by Tom Scott (274-3651), is charged with getting support from large organizations and agencies.

Janet Thornton (552-3323), is in charge of the community outreach subcommittee which is putting on exhibits and distributing materials.

Lewis (563-3174), is handling the communications subcommittee which is creating a speaking bureau and a letter-to-the-editor campaign.

Ovations seeks to honor people or programs in Alaska worthy of special recognition. Send your suggestions to Ovations, The Anchorage Times, Box 40, Anchorage 99510.

Seat belts saved lives

As a result of having a child in kindergarten this year, we have been getting a lot of information carried home on seat belts and the fact that they save lives.

I have recently learned that there is a coalition in the state of Alaska to pass a seat belt law.

I would like the people in the state of Alaska to know that we as a state need to stand behind this coalition! Four years ago my 18-month-old son and I were involved in a collision in which

we were hit by another car which was speeding and ran a stop sign.

My son was in a car seat and had only a small scratch on his forehead.

I did sustain a broken jaw and two broken wrists, but would have been killed if not belted in. The ambulance crew that came to assist saw the car and immediately assumed there were no survivors. They were shocked to find us alive when they got to the car.

A 15-second chore of fastening myself and my child in had saved our lives. Yes, people may object to a seat belt law because it is an "infringement on their rights." However have any of them ever received a phone call from an emergency room telling them of the loss of a loved one who could have been saved by buckling up?

Birgitta Tulip

Anchorage

ALASKA CLIPPING
SERVICE

Chugiak-Eagle
River Star
Eagle River, AK

NOV 21 1985

Residents urged to buckle up during holiday travel time

Next week is All-American Buckle Up Week in Alaska. Gov. Bill Sheffield proclaimed the event which uses the theme, "Start a Habit for Life," according to the Alaska Safety Belt use Coalition.

The coalition said the designation is timed to coincide with Thanksgiving week because that is the time when many people traditionally are on the road, heading toward family celebrations.

During the 1984 Thanksgiving holiday, the coalition said, 603 people lost their lives in traffic accidents.

"If everyone in the country

were to accept the challenge of this year's All-American Buckle Up, we could save hundreds of holiday gatherings from being held in hospitals," the Coalition said in its announcement.

In his proclamation, Sheffield said, "Experts believe that the use of safety belts could prevent up to half the fatalities and reduce the number of serious injuries significantly — if only people would take the time to buckle up when they travel by car." He urged residents to use safety belts when riding in cars during the week and to continue the practice throughout the year.

Air Force aims to reinforce seat belt coalition's efforts

Elmendorf Air Force Base — Automobiles of the future may someday sport a warning similar to that found on a pack of smokes — "Warning: Failure to use a restraining device greatly increases your chances of injury or death in an automobile accident."

That pointed attempt at saving lives by urging people to buckle up may be years down the road, but an effort is under way right now to make people aware of the necessity of seat belt use, via the Alaska Seat Belt Coalition.

The coalition, headed here by Staff Sgt. Janet Thornton of the 43rd Tactical Fighter Squadron, has but one aim — to save lives and prevent injury through the use of seat belts.

With that in mind, the Air Force has taken one more big step in our own mandatory seat belt program. In the past, belt-less drivers faced possible suspension of driving privileges. Beginning Jan. 1, people not wearing seat belts face automatic 10-day revocation of driving privileges.

Mind you, the Alaska Seat Belt Coalition and the Air Force are not connected in any concrete way — but philosophically, we are all in agreement. Seat belts save lives, prevent injuries and actually save the Air Force and the civilian sector big bucks in lost work time, legal



Flight line

S. Sgt. Frank Singleton

problems, medical expenses and other costs.

The coalition is endorsed heartily by the base leadership. Within state government, Gov. Bill Sheffield has issued an order that all state employees will wear restraining devices when in state-owned vehicles.

The policy here is a little more stringent. Any person, civilian or military, is subject to the suspension. If the seat belt coalition has its way, seat belt use will become mandatory throughout Alaska, as it currently is in 15 other states.

Within the next few months, the issue will come before the state Legislature. Within that short time, several Alaskans will be dead and others gravely injured, just because they failed to buckle up.

That's where Sgt. Thornton and her cousin, Staff Sgt. Cheryl Clayton of the 21st Tactical Fighter Wing Safety Office, come in.

"As Outreach Committee Chairman of the coalition, I hope to increase awareness

around the state and here on base. We are setting up displays, exhibits in local malls, designing educational strategies at the lowest level — Santa will be at the Sears Mall next week talking about seat belts, giving the children stickers, window scrapers and other items with one basic message — buckle up for safety," said the sergeant.

Clayton deals with seat belt safety every day in her job as wing safety technician. "Most people don't know an accident at 30 miles per hour is identical to falling off a four story building onto concrete.

The policy will be strictly enforced on base through gate checks, spot checks in parking lots around the base and other means. If you are pulled over by an Air Force law enforcement patrol, chances are the first thing the officer will check is your restraining device, not your driver's license.

So buckle up on Elmendorf. Someday, you may be glad you did.

Staff Sgt. Frank Singleton is an Air Force journalist and editor of the Sourdough Sentinel, Elmendorf's base newspaper. For information concerning the Flightline column or Air Force events and topics, call Singleton at 552-2493, or write to him at 21st TFW, Public Affairs, Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska 99504.

6A • TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 1987 • USA TODAY

ACROSS THE USA

FROM USA TODAY'S NATIONAL NEWS NETWORK

U.S. Supreme Court

■ Let stand or refused cases:

The court let stand:

SEAT BELTS — Illinois law requiring the use of seat belts. Court affirmed an Illinois court ruling that the law was constitutional.

High court rules on seat belt use

'Comparative negligence' could affect money awards in civil suits

By Rosanne Pagano
Times Writer

Alaska's highest court has given motorists one more reason to buckle up: Not wearing seat belts could cost you money.

The Supreme Court ruled that failing to wear seat belts in vehicles equipped with them can be used to prove a motorist's own negligence for traffic accident injuries.

In a personal injury lawsuit, juries may adjust a monetary award according to each party's responsibility.

The court's decision was issued Friday. It stemmed from the Anchorage case of Charles Hutchins, who had sued Robert Schwartz for injuries suffered in a two-car crash.

At Hutchins' trial, Anchorage Superior Court Judge Milton M. Souter allowed jurors to hear testimony that Hutchins had not been wearing a seat belt. Later, the judge told jurors to disregard that evidence.

In deciding on a money award, the jury found that Hutchins was comparatively negligent for his injuries, which included bruises, cuts and a broken toe. Jurors awarded him \$1,937.09 in damages. Hutchins had asked for \$250,000.

He appealed by asking the Supreme Court to find, among other things, that Souter had made mistakes by initially admitting the seat belt testimony and then by denying Hutchins' request for a new trial or a verdict other than the one the jury had reached.

In an opinion by Justice Allen T. Compton, the Supreme Court upheld the jury's decision. Since the court decided comparative negligence can be shown when a motorist fails to wear seat belts, the Supreme Court also found Souter had made no error by allowing jurors to hear the seat belt testimony.

Alaska is among 24 states that have no law requiring adults to wear seat belts. Lobbyists like Frank Bickford, of the Alaska Safety Belt Use Coalition, said Friday's ruling could be useful in making the coalition's point that buckling not only saves lives but makes economic sense.

A-2—Daily News-Miner, Fairbanks, Alaska
Sunday, September 14, 1986



Court ties seat belt use to negligence

Metro Sunday

Anchorage Daily News Sunday, September 14, 1986

No seat belt means smaller injury claim

Court says unbelted motorists partly responsible for injuries

The Associated Press

The Alaska Supreme Court ruled Friday that a motorist involved in a traffic accident is partially responsible for his injuries if he fails to wear a seat belt.

The decision came in an Anchorage case in which Charles Hutchins sued Robert Schwartz for \$275,000 for injuries Hutchins sustained when his car and Schwartz's collided.

Hutchins suffered cuts on his head, bruises on his chest, knee and wrist, and a broken toe. In personal injury lawsuits, juries may adjust a monetary award according to each party's responsibility.

The jury decided Schwartz was 60 percent negligent in causing the accident, and Hutchins was 40 percent negligent. It awarded Hutchins \$1,900 in damages.

During the trial, Superior Court Judge Milton Souter allowed testimony that Hutchins was not wearing a seat belt. However, before the jurors began their deliberations, Souter ordered them to disregard the seat belt evidence.

Hutchins appealed the verdict, arguing that the seat belt testimony never should have been allowed.

Citing cases in Florida and Wisconsin, the Alaska Supreme Court said there is a demonstrable link between wearing seat belts and minimizing injuries.

"Automobile accidents are foreseeable," wrote Justice Allen Compton. "Therefore, if under the facts and circumstances of the case, a reasonably prudent person would have used a seat belt and if plaintiff suffered more severe injuries as a result of not wearing a seat belt, then the jury should be permitted to consider this factor in assessing damages."

The Supreme Court ruled that Souter's actions involving the seat belt evidence were appropriate.

2 JUNEAU EMPIRE, MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 1986

Alaska Supreme Court says not wearing seat belts is negligent

A

STATE OF ALASKA 1987 LEGISLATIVE SESSION
FISCAL NOTE

Bill Version: HB 167
Publish Date: _____

REQUEST: _____
Revision Date: _____
Title: An Act relating to mandatory use of safety devices
Sponsor: Cotten, Ulmer et al
Requestor: State Affairs & Judiciary

Agency Affected: Dept. of Public Safety
BRU: Highway Safety Planning
Components: _____

EXPENDITURES/REVENUES: (Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING	FY 87	FY 88	FY 89	FY 90	FY 91	FY 92
PERSONAL SERVICES						
TRAVEL						
CONTRACTUAL						
SUPPLIES						
EQUIPMENT						
LAND & STRUCTURES						
GRANTS, CLAIMS						
MISCELLANEOUS						
TOTAL OPERATING	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-

CAPITAL						
---------	--	--	--	--	--	--

REVENUE	-0-	15.0	15.0	15.0	15.0	15.0
---------	-----	------	------	------	------	------

FUNDING: (Thousands of Dollars)

GENERAL FUND						
FEDERAL FUNDS						
OTHER						
TOTAL	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-

POSITIONS:

FULL-TIME						
PART-TIME						
TEMPORARY						

ANALYSIS : (Attach a separate page if necessary)

Prepared by: Ellen Moore *cm* Phone: 465-4375
Division: Alaska Highway Safety Planning Agency Date: 3/10/87
Approved by Commissioner: *Y* *hmm* Date: 3/15/87
Agency: Dept. of Public Safety

Distribution (by preparer):
Legislative Finance
Legislative Sponsor
Requestor
Office of Management and Budget
Impacted Agency(ies)
Senate Secretary

JML
3/13/87

B

STATE OF ALASKA 1987 LEGISLATIVE SESSION
FISCAL NOTE

REQUEST: _____

Bill Version: HB 167

Publish Date: _____

Revision Date: _____

Agency Affected: Health

Title: An act relating to mandatory safety devices

BRU: State Health Services

Sponsor: Cotton, Ulmer, Koponen, et al

Components: Public Health Administration services - EMS

Requestor: _____

EXPENDITURES/REVENUES: (Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING	FY 87	FY 88	FY 89	FY 90	FY 91	FY 92
PERSONAL SERVICES						
TRAVEL						
CONTRACTUAL						
SUPPLIES						
EQUIPMENT						
LAND & STRUCTURES						
GRANTS, CLAIMS						
MISCELLANEOUS						
TOTAL OPERATING	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
CAPITAL	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
REVENUE	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-

FUNDING: (Thousands of Dollars)

GENERAL FUND						
FEDERAL FUNDS						
OTHER						
TOTAL	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-

POSITIONS:

FULL-TIME						
PART-TIME						
TEMPORARY	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-

ANALYSIS : (Attach a separate page if necessary)

Enactment of HB 167 would have no direct fiscal impact on the Department of Health and Social Services.

Prepared by: Mark S. Johnson
Division: PUBLIC HEALTH

Phone: 465-3027
Date: March 12, 1987

Approved by Commissioner: [Signature]
Agency: Dept. of Health & Social Services

Date: 3/19/87

Distribution (by preparer):

- Legislative Finance
- Legislative Sponsor
- Requestor
- Office of Management and Budget
- Impacted Agency(ies)
- Senate Secretary

**STATE OF ALASKA 1987 LEGISLATIVE SESSION
FISCAL NOTE**

B

REQUEST: _____

Bill Version : HB 167
Publish Date : _____

Revision Date: _____
Title: An act relating to mandatory safety devices

Agency Affected: Health
BRU: State Health Services

Sponsor: Cotton, Ulmer, Koponen, et al
Requestor: _____

Components: Public Health Administration services - EMS

EXPENDITURES/REVENUES: (Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING	FY 87	FY 88	FY 89	FY 90	FY 91	FY 92
PERSONAL SERVICES						
TRAVEL						
CONTRACTUAL						
SUPPLIES						
EQUIPMENT						
LAND & STRUCTURES						
GRANTS, CLAIMS						
MISCELLANEOUS						
TOTAL OPERATING	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
CAPITAL	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
REVENUE	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-

FUNDING: (Thousands of Dollars)

GENERAL FUND						
FEDERAL FUNDS						
OTHER						
TOTAL	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-

POSITIONS:

FULL-TIME						
PART-TIME						
TEMPORARY	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-

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Division: Public Health

Phone: 465-3027
Date: March 12, 1987

Approved by Commissioner: *James M. Mueser*
Agency: Dept. of Health & Social Services

Date: 3/19/87

Distribution (by preparer):

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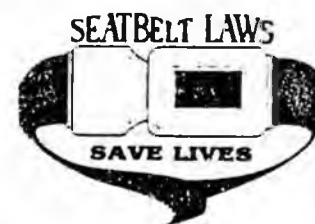
ALASKA SAFETY BELT USE COALITION
319 SEWARD ST. #8
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99801
907-586-1400

3/10/87

THE FOLLOWING ARE ORGANIZATIONS WHO SINCE
1985 HAVE PASSED SUPPORTING RESOLUTIONS OR
SENT LETTERS IN SUPPORT OF A MANDATORY SEAT
BELT LAW IN ALASKA :

R- RESOLUTION
L - LETTER

ALASKA NURSES ASSOCIATION- R
AMERICAN SOCIETY OF SAFETY ENGINEERS/AK. CHAPTER-R
CHUCK E. CHEESE, INC.- R
MOTHERS AGAINST DRUNK DRIVING / JUNEAU CHAPTER-R
ALASKA TREATMENT CENTER-R
ALASKA REVIEW BOARD ON ALCOHOLISM-R
ALASKA ADVISORY BOARD ON DRUG ABUSE-R
HUMANA HOSPITAL/EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE-L
NORTH STAR COUNCIL ON AGING-R
ALASKA DENTAL SOCIETY-R
ALASKA COUNCIL ON PREVENTION OF ALCOHOL AND DRUG -
ABUSE-R
ALASKA STATE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION-L
ALASKA LUNG ASSOCIATION-R
BLUE CROSS OF WASHINGTON AND ALASKA-L
ARCO ALASKA-L
JUNEAU RETIRED TEACHERS ASSOCIATION-R
ALASKA HEALTH EDUCATION CONSORTIUM-R
HIGHWAY USERS FEDERATION OF ALASKA-R
ALASKA STATE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION AUXILIARY-R
STATE ADVISORY COUNCIL ON EMERGENCY MEDICAL -
SERVICES-R
DIRECTORS: FEDERAL SAFETY & HEALTH -
COUNCIL/SOUTHCENTRAL ALASKA-R
HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF ALASKA-R
SOURDOUGH ADVENTURES-R
MORRISON - KNUDSEN CO.-R
ALASKA ACADEMY OF PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS-R



STATE OF ALASKA

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

DIVISION OF STATE TROOPERS

BILL SHEFFIELD, GOVERNOR
Robert J. Sundberg
Commissioner

5700 E. TUDOR ROAD
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99507

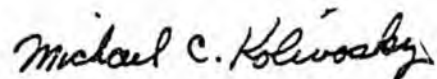
March 3, 1986

Mr. Frank Bickford
Statewide Coordinator
Alaska Safety Belt Use Coalition
319 Seward Street, #8
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Mr. Bickford:

The Alaska State Troopers enforcement of a mandatory seat belt law will be that enforcement incidental to other traffic stops in the normal course of patrol as well as information developed in the course of traffic accident investigations.

Sincerely,



Colonel Michael C. Kolivosky
Director
Alaska State Troopers

MCK/ln

cc: Rep. M. Mike Miller

For an Act entitled: "An Act relating to mandatory use of safety devices."

This act repeals and reenacts AS 28.05.095 to require that "a person may not occupy a motor vehicle while in operation unless restrained by a safety belt." Children under 4 years old are required to be in a U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) approved child safety device, and children between four and six must be in an approved safety device or secured by a seatbelt.

This bill would exempt school bus and emergency vehicle passengers from the requirement, vehicle operators engaged in the delivery of mail and others as determined by regulation where a restraint is impractical for medical or other physical conditions.

The Department of Health and Social Services strongly supports the passage of this bill for the following reasons:

- 1) Motor vehicle crashes are a leading cause of death, injury and longterm disability;
- 2) Numerous studies have shown that seat belts and other vehicle safety restraints substantially reduce the likelihood of death or injury to motor vehicle occupants involved in crashes;
- 3) Efforts to educate the public about the benefits of seatbelts have failed to convince the majority of vehicle occupants to use them.

Background

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for persons between 1 and 35 years of age. For teenagers, car crash fatalities outnumber the next five causes of death combined.

Nationally, over the past decade more than 450,000 persons have died on America's highways. Every year over 40,000 persons are killed in automobile accidents in the United States, and more than 300,000 people suffer moderate to severe and critical injuries. Many of the injured are young people who will never work again for the rest of their lives.

In Alaska, from 1980 through 1984, unintentional injuries (accidents) have been the leading cause of death. Motor vehicle crashes and drowning have been the chief causes of these deaths. In 1985 there were 127 deaths and more than 6,000 Alaskans were injured as a result of motor vehicle crashes in this state.

According to the Division of Insurance, bodily injury claims payments for private passenger non-fleet automobile liability in Alaska totaled over six million dollars in 1983 and was over eight million in 1984. These amounts do not include paid losses from other third party payers, such as Medicare, Medicaid, General Relief Medical, Indian Health Service or Workers' Compensation. Clearly, in addition to the unacceptable losses from premature death and disabilities, motor vehicle crashes create a significant financial

burden which is shared by all citizens.

Worldwide, about 30 countries have mandated seat belt use. In Great Britain seat belt use rose from about 40% to 90-95% with the passage of a mandatory use law. At the same time, the number of individuals treated in emergency rooms as the result of motor vehicle crashes has dropped 15%. There were also 15 to 20% fewer fatalities in the years since the passage of the law.

In Canada, four provinces have enacted mandatory seat belt use laws. The effectiveness of these laws in increasing belt use has been shown to be dependent on the degree to which they are enforced. In provinces where strict enforcement has been practiced belt use has been as high as 80%. Deaths due to motor vehicle crashes have declined 11% and injuries 6% in provinces with mandatory use laws.

In this country, twenty-five states and the District of Columbia now have mandatory belt use laws. New York was the first state to pass such a law. Seatbelt use there has ranged from 39% to 76%. These use rates have resulted in about a 9% drop in motor vehicle crash fatalities.

It is clear that the use of seat belts can reduce the number of deaths and disabilities due to motor vehicle crashes. A mandatory seat belt use law would go far to achieve this goal and complement existing traffic safety legislation regarding driving while intoxicated, maximum speed limits, and licensing requirements.

Position

The Department of Health and Social Services strongly supports this bill because it can result in decreases in the number of deaths, disabilities and injuries caused by motor vehicle crashes.

Recommended by:

Elizabeth Ward
Elizabeth Ward, M.N.
Director
Division of Public Health

Date:

March 18, 87

Approved by:

Myra M. Munson
Myra M. Munson, Commissioner
Department of Health and
Social Services

Date:

March 19, 1987



Legislative Update 3/11/87

3/6/87 - THE ALASKA SAFETY BELT USE COALITION ENDORSES HB 167, REQUIRING SAFETY BELT USE IN PASSENGER VEHICLES. HB 167 WAS INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE SAM COTTEN AND HAS 11 CO-SPONSORS REPRESENTING DEMOCRAT AND REPUBLICAN LEGISLATORS.

3/10/87 - IN THE PAST THREE WEEKS THE COALITION HAS COLLECTED OVER 2,500 SIGNATURES IN SUPPORT OF A MANDATORY SEAT BELT LAW IN ALASKA. THE SIGNATURES WERE GATHERED AT THE FUR RENDEZVOUS BOOTH EXHIBIT FAIR/ANCHORAGE, THE SOLDOTNA/PENINSULA CENTER MALL FAIR, THE WORLD OF WHEELS CAR SHOW/ANCHORAGE, AND THE IDITAROD DAYS FAIR/WASILLA.

3/87 - MICHIGAN TRAFFIC FATALITY RATE DROPPED DURING 1986. MICHIGAN'S TRAFFIC FATALITY RATE RELATIVE TO THE NUMBERS OF MILEAGE DRIVEN WAS THE LOWEST IN HISTORY DURING 1986, ACCORDING TO THE MICHIGAN STATE POLICE WHO CREDITED THE STATE'S SAFETY BELT USE LAW.

SAFETY BELT USE LAW NOTES -

* BELT USE LAWS MOTIVATE PEOPLE TO BUCKLE UP WHO OTHERWISE WOULDN'T. BELT USE LAWS CAUSE FEWER MOTORISTS TO KILL OR INJURE OTHERS. BELT USE LAWS RESULT IN BELT USE HABITS THAT CAN PREVENT DRIVER LOSS OF CONTROL BY HOLDING THE DRIVER IN PLACE BEHIND THE WHEEL.

* OTHER SIMILAR TRAFFIC SAFETY LAWS PROTECT MOTORISTS AND OTHERS, SUCH AS SPEED LIMITS, DRINKING AND DRIVING AND DRIVER LICENSING. SAFETY BELT USE LAWS ARE CONSISTENT WITH THESE AND OTHER LAWS.



Mr. Herbert E. Everett
3217 Wiley Post Loop
Anchorage, AK 99517
March 9, 1987

Fran Ulmer
District 4, Juneau
Pouch V
Juneau, AK 99811

Dear Legislator,

As a fellow Alaskan, I support you in your efforts for a Mandatory Seat Belt Law in Alaska in 1987. As a safety professional, I tell you that a seat belt law must be passed.

Twenty-four states and the District of Columbia have approved seat belt laws. The statistics from these states show that compliance is going up and deaths and injuries are going down.

In addition to the safety factor, seat belt laws are cost effective. Seat belts can reduce traffic fatalities which are eight times as expensive to investigate as non-injury accidents.

A recent statewide poll in Alaska shows that over 65 percent of Alaskan residents support a mandatory seat belt law. The message is clear -- let's start saving lives, reducing injuries, and saving the economy's money by adopting a seat belt use law.

In closing, I would like to add that in 15 years of investigating auto accidents, I have never seen a fatal individual unbuckled from the wreck.

Thank you for your support in the "life saving effort."

Sincerely,

Herbert E. Everett
HERBERT E. EVERETT

cy to: All Alaskan Legislators

Denise McKinney
Route 2, Box 54-D Vista Drive
Ketchikan, Alaska 99901

March 16, 1987

Representative Fran Ulmer
State Affairs Chair
Pouch V
State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99811

RECEIVED
1987

RECEIVED MAR 18 1987

Dear Representative Ulmer:

The intent of this letter is to strongly urge the support of HB 167. Unfortunately, I will be out of town and unable to participate in the teleconference on March 20, 1987.

I have always advocated freedom of choice and the rights of the individual, and will continue to do so as long as the individual making the decision is the only person affected by the outcome. However, in the case of safety restraints, the decision not to use them by one person has the potential of injuring or killing others, as well as costing our state a fortune in health care dollars.

I would like to think that education of the public alone would be sufficient to encourage the use of seatbelts, but in my position as the Education Coordinator of our local hospital, and being directly involved with community education, I know it is not. Working in our emergency room, I have seen first hand the results of not using safety restraints more times than I care to remember. It is such a tragic, unnecessary waste.

It will take a law. Please help to push this life saving and dollar saving bill through this session.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

Denise McKinney
Denise A. McKinney

D

Joe L. Hayes

March 11, 1987

Representative Fran Ulmer
State Affairs Committee
Room 102, Capitol Building
Juneau, AK 99811

Dear Chairman Ulmer:

I would like to comment on HB 167: "An act relating to mandatory use of safety devices."

First, let me say that I endorse and support HB 167. In 1985, the last year of available automobile accident reports, 100 Alaskans were killed on our streets and highways and only 6 of the 100 were wearing seat belts. These statistics are tragic, but the real tragedy is that many of these deaths could have been prevented had these people been wearing their seat belts at the time of their accident.

Obviously, if everyone would voluntarily wear their seat belts, there would be no need for a law. Studies have even demonstrated that most people are aware of the lifesaving value of safety belts and know that they can only be effective if they are worn. Yet, many people neglect to wear their seat and shoulder belts.

Educational/volunteer campaigns promoting seat belt use have been launched here in Alaska for years. The amount of money is great and the residual impact slight.

Experience in the 25 states that have seat belt laws has shown that high belt use compliance can best be attained with the combination of seat belt laws and education.

In state after state after the mandatory seat belt law has passed, data shows that compliance is much higher than it was prior to the law. The five states with the longest experience with safety belt laws - Illinois, Michigan, New Jersey, New York and Texas - decreases in fatalities range from 10 to 26 percent.

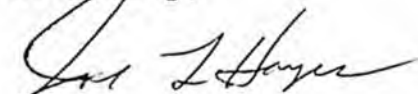
Representative Fran Ulmer

-2-

March 11, 1987

Seat belt laws are saving lives, preventing injuries, and achieving savings for states in medical insurance cost, legal expenses, lost production and human capital costs. The weight of the facts calls for a seat belt law in Alaska.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Joe L. Hayes".

Joe L. Hayes

DATE: January 8, 1987

TO:

FRANK BICKFORD

~~FRANK BICKFORD~~

FROM:

~~FRANK BICKFORD~~

SUBJECT: Fatality Statistics

In response to your request for fatality and enforcement statistics in post-law states, we were able to glean the following information from our files:

MICHIGAN

A state police study found there were 95 fewer deaths on Michigan roads during the first full year of the safety-belt law than during the previous year.

In 1985, there were 2.1 deaths per 100 million miles driven. In 1986, there were less than two deaths per 100 million miles driven.

The study showed, on average, 2,000 tickets and 2,000 warnings were handed out each month for safety-belt violations.

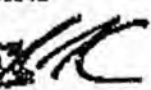
ILLINOIS

The fatality figures for the last five years are as follows: 1986, 1,603; 1985, 1,522; 1984, 1,572; 1983, 1,553; 1982, 1,671.

Fatalities for January 1986 decreased by 17 percent compared to the five-year average for January.

DATE: January 8, 1987

TO: FRANK BICKFORD
~~FRANK BICKFORD~~

FROM: ~~FRANK BICKFORD~~ 

SUBJECT: Fatality Statistics

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The study showed, on average, 2,000 tickets and 2,000 warnings were handed out each month for safety-belt violations.

ILLINOIS

In 1986, fatality figures rose by approximately 5 percent according to the Illinois Transportation Department. The reasons for this increase, according to officials, include a 36 percent compliance rate, over 4 percent more travel due to good weather conditions, low gas prices, and the fact the Supreme Court ruling declaring the law constitutional was not handed down until late in the year.

The fatality figures for the last five years are as follows: 1986, 1,603; 1985, 1,522; 1984, 1,572; 1983, 1,553; 1982, 1,671.

Fatalities for January 1986 decreased by 17 percent compared to the five-year average for January.

The Illinois Transportation Department said from January to July 1986 1,124 tickets and 36,728 warnings were issued by the state police.

TEXAS

According to the Department of Public Safety, fatalities dropped 13.3 percent during the first six months of the safety-belt law as compared to the same period one year earlier. 1,624 people died on Texas roads between September 1984 and May 1985 as opposed to 1,407 between September 1985 and May 1986.

Enforcement within Texas is said to be the strongest in the country, with compliance around 70 percent.

LOUISIANA

A state police study found, during the Thanksgiving Holiday this year, nine people lost their lives as opposed to 15 deaths last year before the law.

The same study found that during the Labor Day weekend, highway fatalities dropped from 17, before the law in 1985, to 10 after the law in 1986.

NEW YORK

Deaths dropped 27 percent during the first two months the law became effective. (Reported in a University of Michigan study.)

In 1985 there were 52,000 head injuries as opposed to 60,000 in 1984, according to New York Governor Mario Cuomo.

NEW JERSEY

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reported 407 front-seat passengers died in auto accidents from March to December of 1985, compared with 468 for the March-December average of the previous five years.

Since New Jersey has passed its law, front-seat fatalities have been cut by 13 percent.

CALIFORNIA

Deaths from auto-accident-induced head injuries were reduced by 25 percent in the first year after the law went into effect, according to the American Association for Automotive Medicine.

NATIONAL

NHTSA reported a 25 percent drop in injuries and 7 percent drop in fatalities in the first fifteen post-law states and the District of Columbia.

NHTSA reported in New York, New Jersey, Michigan, Illinois, Texas, Missouri, Nebraska and North Carolina (all post-law states), a total of 280 fewer auto accident deaths were recorded in 1985 than in 1984.

Here's some more information:

1. During 1985, the first full year New York had a belt-use law, fatalities dropped to its lowest level since 1949. Serious injuries also dropped 19% and moderate injuries dropped 20%.
2. In the state of Washington, fatalities dropped from 57 in December of 1985 to 49 in December of 1986. Of the 49 who were killed in December of 1986, only 8 wore belts.

BILL NO: HB 167

DATE: March 10, 1987

TITLE: An Act relating to mandatory use of safety devices

CONTACT: Ellen Moore

7

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

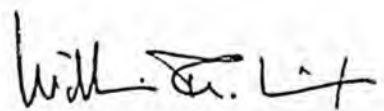
As many as 50% of traffic deaths and 65% of the injuries could be prevented if all motorists wore the safety belt that has been required equipment in every passenger vehicle manufactured since 1968.

Highway safety professionals have urged the use of these devices through public information and education programs for twenty years, and have had only limited success in increasing their use.

Twenty-five states now require motorists to wear seatbelts. Each state has experienced different levels of compliance and, as a consequence, different rates of reduction in fatalities and injuries. The more stringent the law and the more diligent the enforcement, the higher the rate of usage that has been achieved and the greater the reduction in fatalities and injuries. However, it must be pointed out that regardless of the emphasis placed on enforcement, usage rates have increased in every state that has enacted seatbelt legislation of any kind.

The health and safety of its citizens are legitimate concerns of every state government. The failure of most motorists to wear their safety belts affects each of us every time we renew our automobile insurance. Automobile accidents are the largest single response category for ambulance services. As many as 25% of all ambulance trips are to the scene of injury-producing traffic accidents. Peace officers spend an enormous amount of time investigating automobile accidents, especially when injuries or deaths are involved. Hospital emergency rooms and rehabilitation centers are among other direct services provided to victims of automobile accidents. State and local governments directly fund these activities. The indirect costs to society are even greater in terms of vitality and productivity lost and dependents added to the welfare roles.

The Department of Public Safety supports passage of this bill.


William R. Nix
Acting Commissioner