

**S B**

**59**

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE AFFAIRS**

**RECAP OF  
CSSB 59 (Trans) am**

**Mandatory Seatbelts**

Received April 26, 1990  
by Sen. Sturgulewski, Uehling, and Duncan

Heard May 1, 1990

Passed Out of Committee May 1, 1990  
4 Do Pass

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# HOUSE COMMITTEE REPORT

(7)

Date Referred: April 26, 1990

FURTHER REFERRALS:

Date of Committee Action: \_\_\_\_\_

The STATE AFFAIRS Committee considered:

CSSB 59(Trsp)am

CS SB NO. 59 (Transportation) am

MANDATORY SEATBELTS

"An Act relating to mandatory use of safety devices in motor vehicles."

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- [ ] be replaced with \_\_\_\_\_ [ ] the same title
- [ ] \_\_\_\_\_ [ ] a new title
- [ ] have attached amendment(s)
- do pass
- [ ] do not pass
- [ ] no recommendation
- [ ] individual recommendations
- [ ] additional referral to the \_\_\_\_\_ Committee

ADOPTS: \_\_\_\_\_ letter of intent

ATTACHES NEW FISCAL NOTE(s):  
(Dept)

APPROVES PREVIOUS: (Date/Dept)

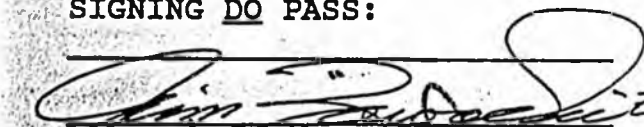
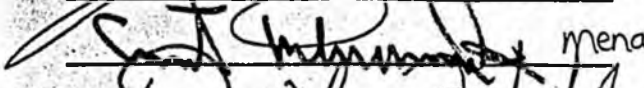
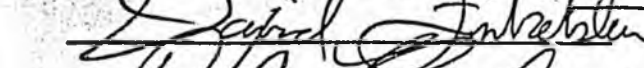
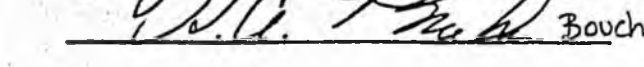
- [ ] fiscal impact \_\_\_\_\_
- [ ] zero fiscal note \_\_\_\_\_
- [ ] zero with analysis \_\_\_\_\_

- [ ] fiscal note(s) \_\_\_\_\_
- [ 3 ] zero fiscal note(s) 4/23/90. Court Syst.  
4/23/90. HRS
- [ ] zero fn/analysis 4/23/90. Pub Safety

SIGNING DO PASS:

SIGNING:  
(Check approp. column)

Do Not  
Pass      No Rec      Amend

 Zawacki				
 Menard				
 Finkelstein				
 Boucher				

  
Chairman's Signature

STATE OF ALASKA  
1990 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Bill Version: **C88B 69** (Trsp) (a) Item 2  
Publish Date: 4/23/90

## FISCAL NOTE

**REQUEST:**

Revision Date:	Agency Affected:	Alaska Court System
Title: <u>An Act relating to mandatory use of safety devices in motor vehicles</u>	BRU:	Trial Courts
Sponsor: <u>Sturgulowski, Uehling, Duncan ...</u>	Components:	
Requestor: <u>Rules</u>		

**EXPENDITURES/REVENUES:** (Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING	FY 90	FY 91	FY 92	FY 93	FY 94	FY 95
Personal Services						
Travel						
Contractual						
Supplies						
Equipment						
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims						
<b>TOTAL OPERATING</b>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

<b>CAPITAL</b>						
----------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

<b>REVENUE</b>						
----------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

**FUNDING:** (Thousands of Dollars)

General Funds	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Federal Funds						
Other						
<b>TOTAL</b>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

**POSITIONS:**

Full-time						
Part-time						
Temporary						

**ANALYSIS:** (Attach a separate page if necessary)

No fiscal impact.

Prepared by: Jan Strapcoberg, General Counsel  
 Division: Alaska Court System

Approved by: Arthur H. Spowden, Administrative Director  
 Agency: Alaska Court System

Phone: 264-8228  
 Date: 04/18/90

Date: 04/18/90

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

FISCAL NOTE

REQUEST:

Revision Date: 4/18/90  
Title: Mandatory use of safety devices  
in Motor Vehicles  
Sponsor: Senator Sturgulewski, et al  
Requestor: Senate Rules

Agency Affected: Public Safety  
BRU: Highway Safety Planning Agency  
Component: \_\_\_\_\_

EXPENDITURES/REVENUES: (Thousands of Dollars) (Inflation not included)

OPERATING	FY 91	FY 92	FY 93	FY 94	FY 95	FY 96
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
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REVENUE	0	0	0	0	0	0
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FUNDING: (Thousands of Dollars)

GENERAL FUND						
FEDERAL FUNDS						
OTHER/PROG RCPT						
TOTAL	0	0	0	0	0	0

POSITIONS:

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

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

No fiscal impact is anticipated. Revenue generated will be negligible. Section 3 provides for judicial waiving of the \$15.00 fine if a donation is made to the Emergency Medical Services entity serving the locale where the violation occurred.

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

Phone: 465-4375  
Date: 4/18/90

Approved by Commissioner: Arthur English  
Agency: Department of Public Safety

Date: 4-18-90  
Page 1 of 1

JNR  
4/18/90

# FISCAL NOTE

REQUEST:

Revision Date: February 2, 1989 Agency Affected: Health and Social Services  
 Title: An Act Relating to Mandatory Use of Safety Devices BRU: State Health Services  
 Sponsor: Sturgulewski. et. al. Components: EMS Training and Licensure  
 Requester: Transportation Committee

EXPENDITURES/REVENUES: (Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING	FY 91	FY 92	FY 93	FY 94	FY 95	FY 96
Personal Services						
Travel						
Contractual						
Supplies						
Equipment						
Land & Structures						
Grants, Claims						
Miscellaneous						
<b>TOTAL OPERATING</b>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

<b>CAPITAL</b>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
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<b>REVENUE</b>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
----------------	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

FUNDING: (Thousands of Dollars)

General Funds						
Federal Funds						
Other						
<b>TOTAL</b>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

POSITIONS

Full-Time	0	0	0	0	0	0
Part-Time	0	0	0	0	0	0
Temporary						

ANALYSIS: (attach a separate page if necessary)  
No fiscal impact in FY 90.

Prepared By: Katherine Kelley, Dr. P. H., Director  
 Division: Public Health  
 Approved By Commissioner: Myra Munson  
 Agency: Health and Social Services

Phone: 465-3090  
 Date: 04/15/90  
 Date: 4/19/90

Distribution (by preparer):

Legislative Finance, Legislative Sponsor, Requestor,  
Office of Management & Budget, Impacted Agency(ies)

Item 3

# Alaska State Legislature



2957 SHELDON JACKSON STREET  
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99508

While in Juneau  
P.O. BOX V  
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99811  
(907) 465-3818

SENATOR  
ARLISS STURGULEWSKI  
Senate President Pro Tempore  
Chairman, Senate Rules Committee

## Senate

MEMORANDUM

April 24, 1990

TO: Representative Red Boucher  
FROM: Senator Arliss Sturgulewski  
RE: Senate Bill 59

I appreciate your scheduling of SB 59 for May 1st in the House State Affairs Committee.

It has been conclusively demonstrated that seatbelt use results in a savings of both lives and money. Study after study shows that persons injured in automobile accidents have less severe injuries and spend far less on health care if they were using a seatbelt at the time of the accident. It has been estimated that on a national basis, each 10 percent increase in safety-belt use results in 30,000 fewer serious and moderate injuries and a savings of \$800 million in direct costs to society.

Alaskans can be healthier and safer if strongly encouraged to use safety devices in motor vehicles. This proposed law is designed to encourage compliance by rather than punishment for those who don't wear safety belts. That is the reason behind making non-compliance a

secondary offense.

Attached are a number of editorials from newspapers statewide encouraging us to pass this legislation. In addition, I have attached a sectional analysis, extracts of studies, and statistical information about accident and compliance rates.

The fiscal notes received for this bill are zero.

Please call me or Melissa Fouse of my staff at 3818 if you have any questions.

Sectional Analysis  
Committee Substitute for Senate Bill 59 (Transportation) am  
26 April 1990

SECTION ONE:

Repeals & reenacts AS 28.05.095, adding a new (a) requiring a person 16 years of age or older to be restrained by a safety belt in a motor vehicle if either a passenger or the driver.

Subsection (b) is current language of prior (a) with the exception of line 22, after "is" [BETWEEN FOUR AND SIX] is deleted and "is four but not yet 16" is added.

Subsection (c) is current (b), except that

(1) schoolbuses that are required by the U.S. Department of Transportation to have seatbelts are not exempted.

(2) new exception for mail or newspaper carriers.

(3) "child" is changed to "person". Section is old (2).

(4) "child is changed to person" and "or (b)" is added after (a). Section is old (3).

Current (4) is exemption for rural areas. The bill removes that exemption.

Subsection (d) is the old subsection (c).

Subsection (e) is new. This section provides that a peace officer may not stop a motor vehicle to determine if the passenger or driver is wearing a safety device, nor may a peace officer issue a citation unless the peace officer has stopped the motor vehicle for another reason. This section makes the violation a secondary offense.

SECTION 2:

This is a technical changes - "child" is changed to "person" and "safety belt" is added.

SECTION 3:

Subsection (a) allows the court to fine a person who is not wearing a safety belt in a motor vehicle or who removes a safety belt from a motor vehicle so as to be exempted from the requirement to wear a safety belt.

The \$15 may be waived by the court if \$15 is donated to the Emergency Medical Services entity in the area where the violation occurred.

Subsection (b) adds the penalty for violating the requirement that a child be in a child safety device that was deleted from subsection (a). The state affairs committee substitute added language limiting the fine for this infraction to \$50.

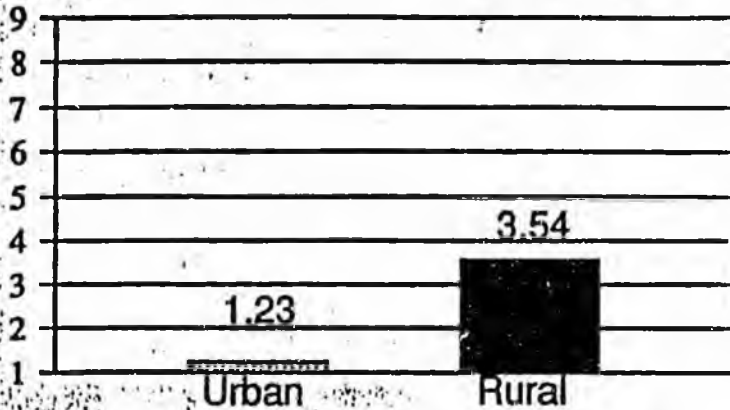
#### SECTION 4:

This section directs the supreme court to adopt a mail-in bail procedure for payments of fines for violation of this statute.

Item 5

# ALASKA

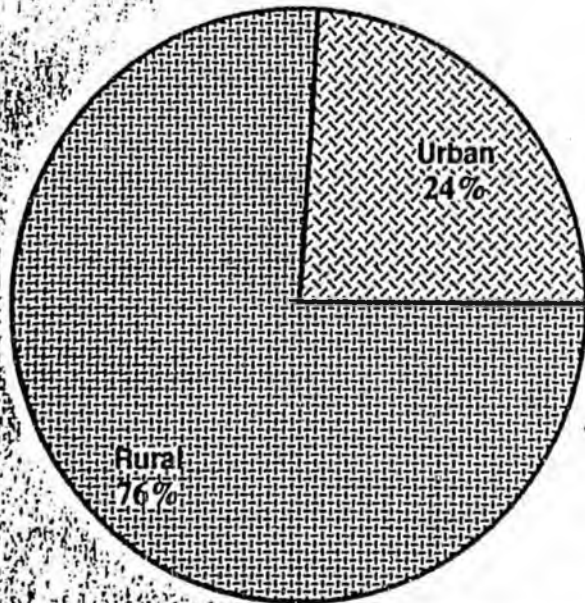
## NUMBER OF DEATHS PER 100 MILLION MILES DRIVEN



National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Statistics

# ALASKA

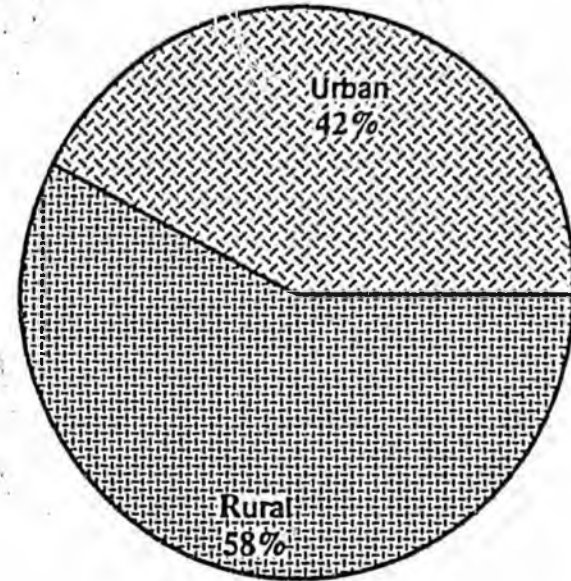
## 101 MOTOR VEHICLE DEATHS IN 1986



National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Statistics

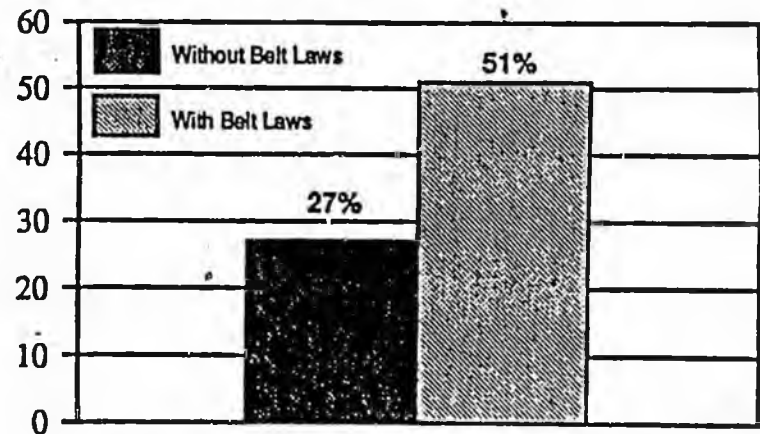
# NATIONALLY

## 46,020 MOTOR VEHICLE DEATHS IN 1986



National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Statistics

# BELT-USE NATIONALLY



NHTSA 19 City Survey Conducted During First Half of 1987

# "SAFETY BELT USE" SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS

APRIL 20, 1990

The list of organizational support continues to grow!!

Here is an updated listing of all resolution support groups and those issuing letters of support for the passage of a safety belt use law (SB59) in Alaska:

3M ALASKA AIR CARRIERS ASSOCIATION  
AAA ALASKA  
A. CLAIRE RENN, MD  
ADVISORY BOARD ON DRUG ABUSE  
AK ACADEMY OF PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS  
AK CH. AMERICAN SOCIETY OF SAFETY ENGINEERS  
AK CHIEFS OF POLICE ASSOCIATION  
AK COUNCIL ON PREVENTION OF DRUG & ALCOHOL ABUSE, INC.  
AK DENTAL SOCIETY  
AK SAFETY ADVISORY COUNCIL  
AK HEALTH EDUCATION CONSORTIUM  
AK LUNG ASSOCIATION  
AK NURSES ASSOCIATION  
AK PEACE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION  
AK REGIONAL EMS COORDINATORS  
AK STATE FIREFIGHTERS ASSOC/PORT OF VALDEZ CH  
AK STATE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION  
AK STATE MEDICAL ASSOC. AUXILLIARY  
AK TREATMENT CENTER  
ALPINE ASSOCIATES  
ANCHORAGE GYMNASTICS  
ANCHORAGE MEDICAL & SURGICAL CLINIC  
ANCHORAGE OBSTETRICS & GYNECOLOGY  
ANCHORAGE SAND & GRAVEL  
ARCO ALASKA/SAFETY DIVISION  
AVIS RENT-A-CAR  
B & C SUPPLY  
BLUE CROSS OF WASHINGTON & ALASKA  
CHEVRON USA  
CHUCK E. CHEESE, INC.  
CLINTON LILLIBRIDGE, MD  
CONSOLIDATED FREIGHTWAYS  
CORFOON & BLACK, INC  
DAWSON SUBARU  
DECLAN NOLAN, MD  
DENALI TRANSPORTATION dba PACIFIC MOVERS  
EASTWIND, INC  
ELIZABETH DESCHWEINITZ, MD  
ERNEST MEINHARDT, MD  
FBI NATIONAL ACADEMY ASSOCIATES  
FEDERAL SAFETY & HEALTH COUNCIL  
FIRESTONE STORES  
GEORGE STRANSKY, MD  
GOODYEAR TIRE & RUBBER CO  
HAROLD'S RENT-A-TRUCK  
HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF ALASKA  
HEALTH CARE COALITION OF ALASKA  
HEDLAND, FLEISCHER, FRIEDMAN, BRENNAN & COOKE

HIGHWAY USERS FEDERATION OF ALASKA  
HUMANA HOSPITAL/EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
JACKOVICH INDUSTRIAL & CONSTRUCTION SUPPLY  
JAMES BERTELSON, MD  
JEFF BRAND, MD  
JOHN FROST, MD  
JOHN SMITH, MD  
JON LYON, MD  
JOY-ROSSTON ZIMMERMAN, RNC, ANP  
JUNEAU RETIRED TEACHERS ASSOCIATION  
JUNIOR TOWNE

KENNETH BEHYMER, MD  
KODIAK CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
KODIAK CRIMESTOPPPERS, INC.  
MADD/ANCHORAGE & JUNEAU CHAPTERS  
MAMMOTH OF ALASKA  
MARK ZIMMERMAN, MD, FACOG  
MORRISON-KNUDSEN CO

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF EMS DIRECTORS  
NATIONAL CAR RENTAL  
NATIONAL HEAD INJURY FOUNDATION  
NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES  
NELL LOFTIN, MD  
NORTHSTAR COUNCIL ON AGING, INC.  
PATRICK BRADY, MD  
PERATROVICH, NOTTINGHAM & DRAGE, INC.  
PHYLLIS KIEHL, MD  
PIONEER HONDA  
POOL ARCTIC, INC.  
REVIEW BOARD ON ALCOHOLISM  
ROTARY CLUB OF KODIAK  
ROY E BENWARD, MD  
SAM DEPALATIS, MD  
SEA-LAND SERVICE, INC.  
SHERMAN BEACHAM, MD  
SHEARSON LEHMAN HUTTON/ALASKA

STATE ADVISORY COUNCIL ON EMS  
STEPHEN KULIN, MD  
THE FAMILY PRACTICE ASSOCIATION  
TRYON WEILAND, MD  
TUBS DOWN UNDER, INC. FAIRBANKS  
WILLIAM FITTS, MD  
WILLIAM BROWNER, MD  
WILSYK ALASKA, INC.

BETHEL CABLEVISION OF BETHEL

## EDITORIAL SUPPORT:

ANCHORAGE DAILY NEWS  
ANCHORAGE TIMES  
FRONTIERSMAN  
VALLEY SUN  
JUNEAU EMPIRE  
FAIRBANKS DAILY NEWS MINER

AMERICAN  
COALITION FOR  
TRAFFIC  
SAFETY, INC.

808 17th Street, N.W. Suite 260  
Washington, D.C. 20006  
(202) 857-0002

PHILIP W. HASELTINE  
Executive Director

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

April 4, 1990

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD — Extensions of Remarks

E 975

✓ SAFETY BELTS CAN SAVE LIVES  
AND MONEY

HON. JOHN D. DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 4, 1990

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to make my colleagues aware of a recent announcement by the American Coalition for Traffic Safety [ACTS] that reports on an important development on our Nation's highway system: the last half of the 1980's was the safest period on America's roads since the early 1960's. Further—and perhaps more important—the mileage death rate, the key barometer of safety progress, reached an all-time low of 2.2 fatalities per 100 million miles of vehicle travel in 1988, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration [NHTSA].

There are many reasons for this progress, but an important factor has to be the dramatic increase in safety belt use which was achieved in the mid to late 1980's through the enactment of State safety belt use laws and other activities to promote safety belt use.

In fact, NHTSA reports that from 1983 to 1988, an estimated 15,500 lives were saved by safety belts, with 10,500 of these due to belt use laws.

This is true progress, but more can and must be done to bring about greater use of safety belts so that highway fatalities can continue to be controlled. In this regard, I am pleased to see that a major campaign has been announced in my State of Michigan to encourage the business community to implement safety belt use programs for employees.

The business community has an important but sometimes unrecognized vested interest in increasing safety belt use. The Michigan Coalition for Safety Belt Use points out that automobile crashes are the leading cause of worker absenteeism and the No. 1 cause of on-the-job fatalities, and they also cost employers nationwide \$1.9 billion per year.

To generate more support for belt use promotion in the business community in Michigan, the coalition is sponsoring workshops throughout the State in May and June. Gov. James Blanchard is the honorary chairman of this project. Secretary of State Richard Austin, a long-time safety belt use advocate, is the chairman. Keynote speakers at the workshops include labor and business leaders.

Mr. Speaker, I am most hopeful that this Michigan project will produce results in terms of increasing safety belt use and reducing traffic fatalities and injuries. The ACTS announcement shows the gains that have been made, but we need to do more, and the Michigan project is an example of the kind of work that can be done. I attach the following statistics for the benefit of my colleagues:

[Compiled by the Michigan Coalition for Safety Belt Use]

1. Traffic crashes rank as the number one killer of Americans ages 1-44.
2. The probability of being involved in a motor vehicle injury crash during a 75-year lifetime is higher than 86 percent.
3. For every dollar invested to encourage people to buckle up, there is a projected return of \$105.07 in economic savings. This return is more than can be gained by any other health-risk-factor intervention, such as encouraging people not to smoke.
4. Currently, 45.8 percent of front seat occupants in Michigan use their safety belts.
5. In Michigan, more than \$750 million is spent each year on medical costs due to the nonuse of safety belts.
6. An average of four people die on Michigan roadways each day due to auto crashes, while over 400 more are injured.
7. Nonuse of safety belts resulted in 548 premature deaths and the loss of 17,736 years of productive working life in Michigan during 1983.
8. In 1988, Michigan averaged 1,123 traffic crashes each day. More than 155,000 persons were injured, crippled, or maimed, and 1,704 people were killed in 1,522 fatal crashes.
9. Auto crashes are the leading cause of worker absenteeism.
10. Auto crashes cost the average employer nearly \$120,000 per employer death.
11. Serious injuries caused by auto crashes result in average medical payments of \$208,400.
12. More employees are injured or killed on the road than in the plant.



1. Report No. DOT HS 807 324		2. Government Accession No.		3. Recipient's Catalog No.	
4. Title and Subtitle Lives Saved by Seat Belts from 1983 through 1987			5. Report Date June 1988		
			6. Performing Organization Code		
7. Author(s) Susan C. Partyka			8. Performing Organization Report No.		
9. Performing Organization Name and Address National Center for Statistics and Analysis 400 7th Street S.W. Washington, D.C. 20590			10. Work Unit No. (TRIS)		
			11. Contract or Grant No.		
12. Sponsoring Agency Name and Address Research and Development National Highway Traffic Safety Administration 400 7th Street S.W. Washington, D.C. 20590			13. Type of Report and Period Covered NHTSA Technical Report 1983-1987		
			14. Sponsoring Agency Code		
15. Supplementary Notes					
16. Abstract  Between 1983 and 1987, seat belts saved the lives of an estimated 10,938 travelers over four years old in the front seats of passenger vehicles (cars, pickups, vans, and utility vehicles). Belt use laws saved 6,907 of these lives (63 percent) by requiring seat belt use in states with belt use laws and encouraging seat belt use in states without belt use laws. Another 4,301 of the lives (37 percent) were saved by pre-law (1983) seat belt use levels.					
17. Key Words accident data, fatalities, seat belts, belt use laws			18. Distribution Statement Document is available to the public through the National Technical Information Service, Springfield, Virginia 22161		
19. Security Classif. (of this report) Unclassified		20. Security Classif. (of this page) Unclassified		21. No. of Pages 17	22. Price

Example:

## The Cost of Non-Use of Safety Belts in Alaska

SOURCE: Alaska Treatment Center

A 27 year old woman who chose to not wear her safety belt, sustained a traumatic head injury and multiple injuries in August, 1985.

Her husband, also not wearing a safety belt, was killed in the accident.

She has 2 small children and is without family support.

The State of Alaska provided approximately \$90,000 worth of inpatient medical care for this client.

Outpatient rehabilitation services over a 13-month period cost the State another \$51,710.

In addition to State funded medical care, this client and her children also receive services from other State funded agencies, such as the Homemaker Program, Daycare Programs, Aid to Families with Dependent Children, Food Stamps and Child Protective Services.

Her prognosis for returning to work is extremely poor.

She plans on remaining in the State of Alaska and will continue to require State funding.



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE  
April 14, 1989

=====

201 OUT OF 231 ALASKANS KILLED IN MOTOR  
VEHICLE ACCIDENTS WERE IN 1985, 1986 &  
1987 WERE NOT BUCKLED UP.

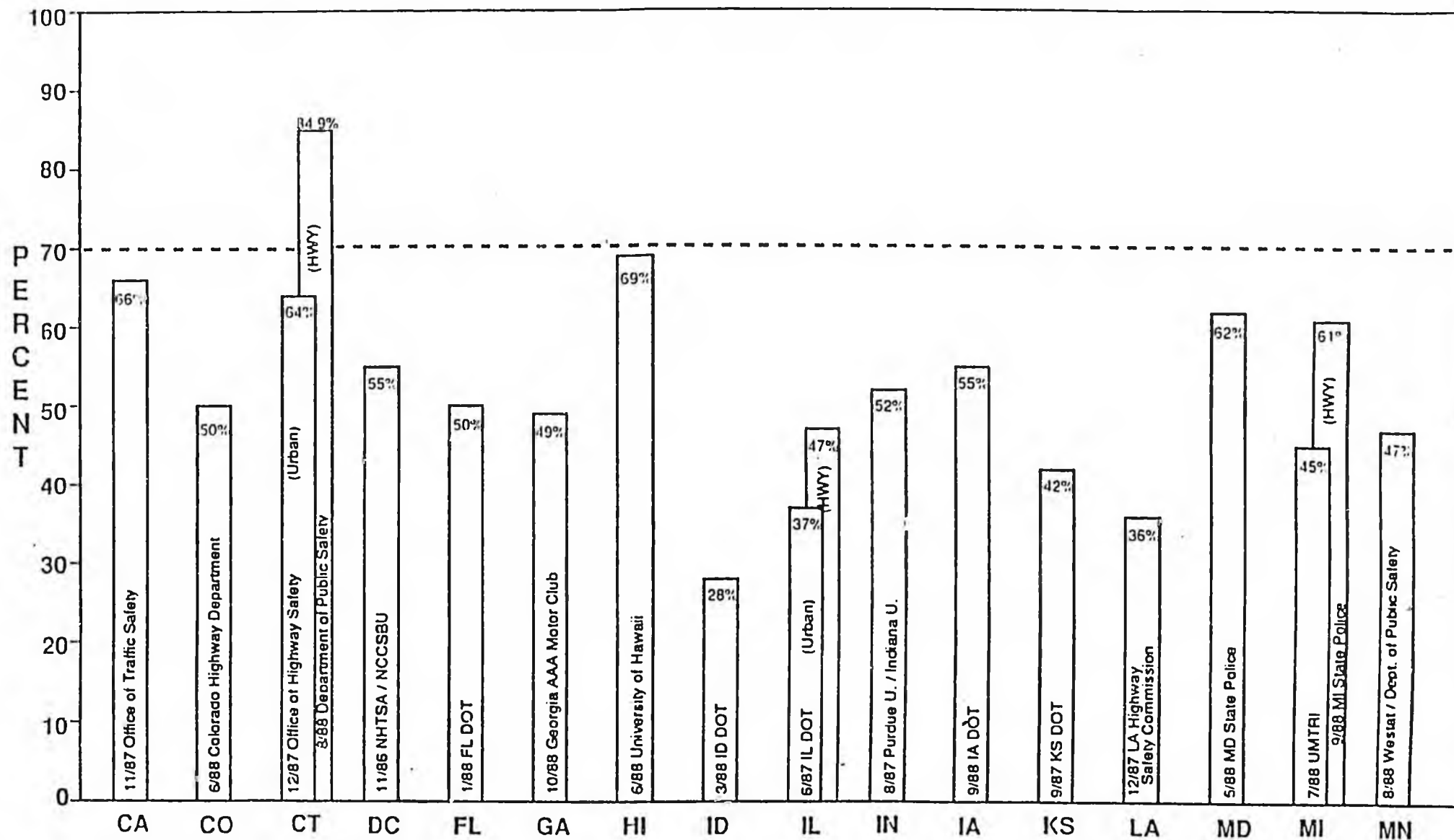
- Statistics from safety experts show that half of these deaths would have been avoided if Alaska had a safety belt use law in place.  
(National Highways Users Federation, 1987)
- =====

■ TWO MORE STATES PASS SAFETY BELT USE LAWS!

✓ The 32nd state to pass a safety belt use law was Wyoming in March.

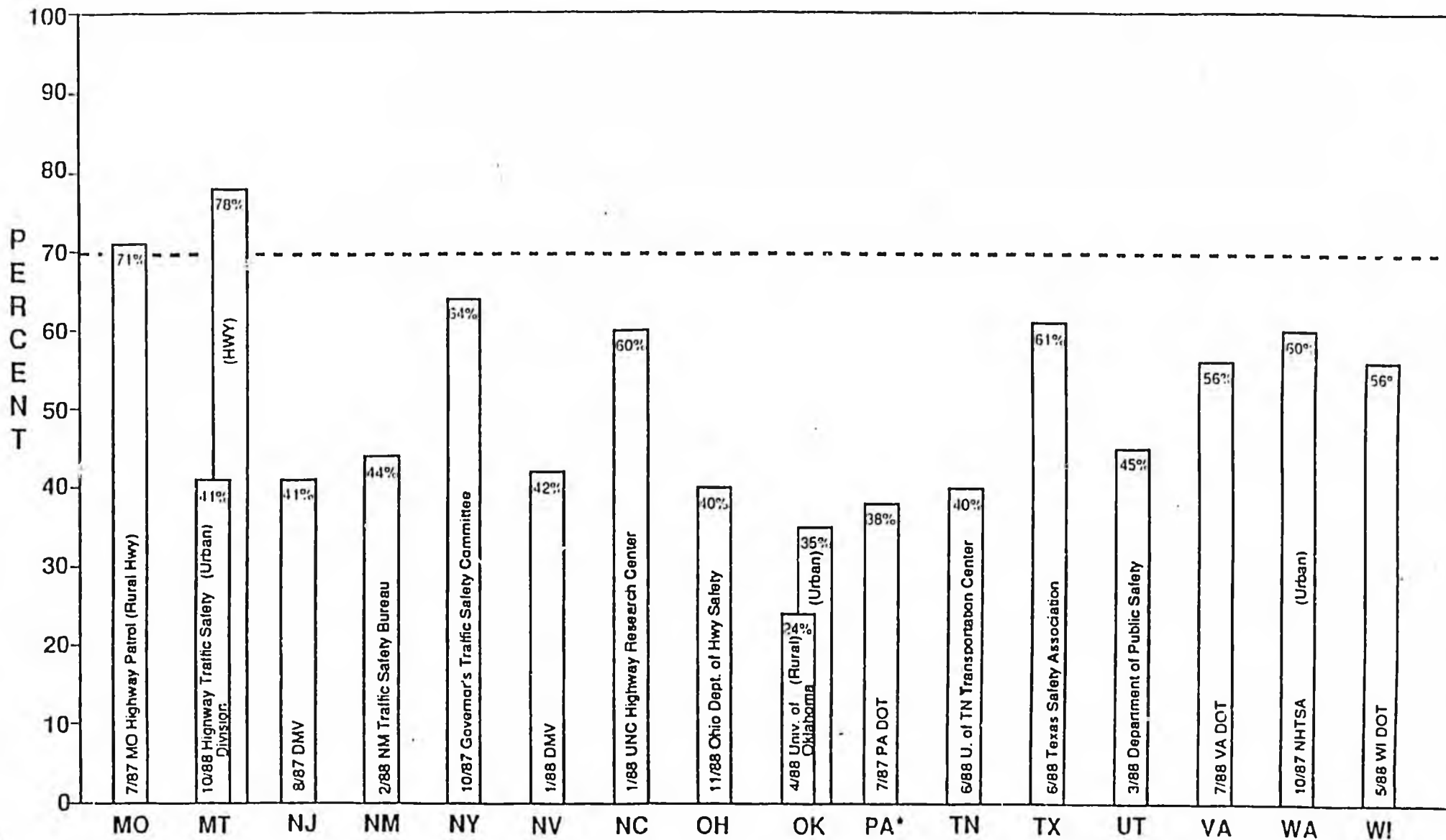
✓ North Dakota became the 33rd state when their safety belt bill was signed into law on April 11, 1989.

# COMPLIANCE RATES IN POST-LAW STATES



# COMPLIANCE RATES IN POST-LAW STATES

Page 2



\* Use rates prior to law taking effect

# FACT SHEET:

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

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## "Effects Of Mandatory Safety Belt Use On Hospital Admissions"

August 1988

This study assessed the effects of Michigan's safety-belt-use law on more than 8,000 motor-vehicle injuries which resulted in hospitalizations at 14 area hospitals.

It was conducted by the University of Michigan School of Public Health from data collected through the Michigan Inpatient Database from January 1980 through October 1986. Major findings of this study include:

- The Michigan safety-belt-use law passed in July 1985 has resulted in a 19-percent reduction in hospitalizations due to automobile accidents.
- There were 20 percent fewer injuries to body extremities following the passage of Michigan's belt-use law.
- Hospitalizations lasting more than one week decreased nearly 25 percent after the law went into effect.
- After the state safety-belt-use law went into effect, minorities experienced 22 percent fewer injuries.
- A 32-percent decline in injuries occurred among patients using public-health insurance after passage of the state law.
- With regard to the contention that safety belts may cause injuries, researchers concluded "the benefits of restraints far exceed the risks associated with them."

\* \* \*



# ALASKA EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES ASSOCIATION



P.O. Box 232153  
Anchorage, AK 99523-2153

April 27, 1990

Honorable H.A. 'Red' Boucher  
House of Representatives  
P.O. Box V  
Juneau, AK 99811

Re: SB 59

Dear Representative <sup>Red</sup>Boucher

The so called "Seat Belt Bill", SB 59, will be heard in the State Affairs Committee on Tuesday, May 1, 1990. The EMS services in Alaska have been pleading with the Legislature for the passage of this bill for 4 years now. The reason, of course, is that we have seen first hand the benefits of safety belts. We are also selfish, not because we want the \$15.00 fine, but because we do not like having to take care of mangled human bodies nor do we get used to seeing death.

We urge you to please pass the bill as adopted by the Senate.

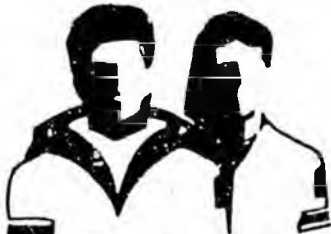
Please call me a 562-6449 if you have any questions or concerns about the bill.

Sincerely,

*Tom*

Tom Scott  
Secretary

P.S. My father and mother in California used to refuse to wear their safety belts. When California passed their law my parents started wearing them "because it is the law." Today, they say they wouldn't start the car without them regardless of the law. The same thing will happen in Alaska.



**EMS**

An Alaskan tradition:  
Neighbor helping neighbor

ANCHORAGE DAILY NEWS  
APRIL 9, 1990

**Way overdue** 4990  
KAPR

*Seat-belt legislation must not die this year*

The arguments and counter-arguments are moldy. The debate is stale. Virtually everything that can be said about a mandatory seat-belt law has been uttered. It's time for lawmakers to vote -- and to pass a mandatory seat-belt bill.

The statistics don't lie: seat belts save lives. The 35 states (and the District of Columbia) that have approved safety belt legislation have a decrease in deaths and injuries. Seat-belt laws also are reducing the medical, legal, and other costs associated with motor accidents.

The proposed Alaska seat-belt law isn't onerous or intrusive. Law enforcement officials will issue citations only if they stop a motorist for another offense. The proposed fine of \$15 barely qualifies as a slap on the wrist. Nevertheless, this legislation establishes seat belt use as a state standard, an official expectation, which is important.

People buckle up when reminded that the law requires it. And people who buckle up live to drive again another day.

WILLIAM S. MORRIS III  
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JUNEAU EMPIRE 5-3-89

# A few minutes to save lives

**I**n the rush to adjournment, important bills are always left in the dust. Maybe, just maybe, the safety bill won't be one of them this year.

The bill, which the House passed earlier this session, has been languishing in the Senate ever since. Why has been more a matter of politics than anything else.

Legislators could not come up with a better, simpler or less expensive bill if they tried. As written, the safety belt bill says that Alaskans must wear their safety belts when in a car. If they are stopped by a police officer for another reason and are not wearing their safety belt, then they will get a \$15 ticket.

Plain and simple.

That's all there is to it.

Some folks try to read a lot of philosophical stuff into this bill. They talk

about their individual rights to bounce themselves and their kids all over the road if they get into a car wreck.

This bill doesn't aim at philosophy. All it aims at is reminding Alaskans that they should wear their safety belts. If they don't and they get into an accident, the odds are vastly greater that they will be injured more seriously than if they had been wearing their belts.

The fact is, of the 231 Alaskans who died in car wrecks in 1986 and 1987, 201 were not wearing their safety belts. If one of those lives could have been saved, this safety belt bill would have been well worth any inconvenience it may have caused.

We understand the Senate is extremely busy now, but it has had since February to pass this bill. With less than a week left in the session, it just seems to us that our senators could find a few minutes to save some lives.

**ISSUE:** Safety belt bill remains in state Senate

1985  
1986  
1987

## FORUM

## Alaskans can live with proposed safety belt law

By FRANK BICKFORD

One thing a one can save 35 Alaskan 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

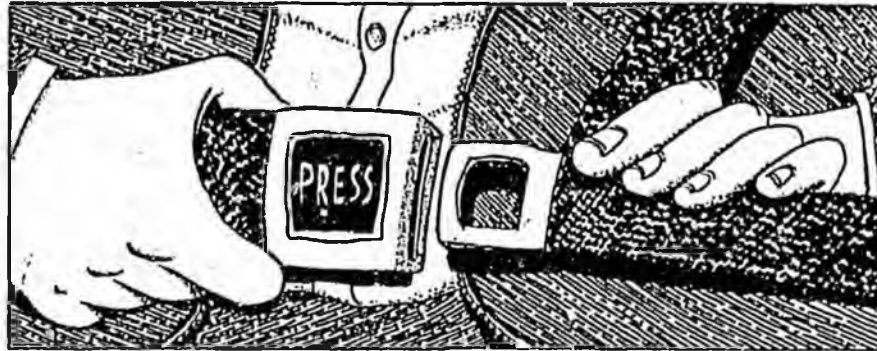


as much as \$15 million, according to estimates from The Alaska Highway Users Study. That one thing is wearing the safety belts already in our cars.

These facts are just four of the reasons Alaska needs a law requiring safety belt use. Although a major purpose of the Alaska Safety Belt Use Law would be to promote the safety of drivers and passengers using their safety belts, such a law would also promote the safety of other street and highway travelers, and promote the public welfare by reducing public expenditures.

In other words, if Alaska requires safety belts to be worn — everyone can benefit! Belt-use laws that have been passed in 31 states and D.C. motivate people to buckle up. Those states found that voluntary use is low. Legislating the use of safety belts saved significant numbers of lives and reduced costs.

Educational campaigns promoting safety belt use have been launched here and across the country. Use of safety belts increases temporarily during the campaign and then returns to a low percentage. The amount of



money spent is great and the residual impact slight.

Safety belt use laws and an aggressive educational campaign must be combined to achieve maximum use. In the absence of a law even with an educational campaign, less than 32 percent of the population will buckle up. However, a Hellenthal statewide poll last year showed that 81 percent of Alaskans would wear safety belts if required by law.

A safety belt use law is the incentive to establish the safety habit in those who otherwise wouldn't buckle up.

If a person is killed or injured, it affects more people than the victim. Persons are not allowed a "freedom to choose" to pay the health care costs of those who "choose" not to wear their safety belts.

The cost of needless fatalities and serious injuries are paid by all persons — not simply the victim. Taxes, insurance premi-

ums and health care costs increase for us all. Unbelted occupants cause injuries to other occupants by becoming "unguided missiles." Thus, the "freedom to choose" to wear the belt does affect others directly.

The costs to society for medical care, rehabilitation, unemployment and welfare services supercede the "right" of people to seriously or fatally injure themselves or others by not buckling up. As a citizen and taxpayer, your rights are infringed upon by those who aren't responsible enough to buckle-up voluntarily; they leave you to pick up the tab for increased costs.

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.

Ninety percent of those persons killed in motor vehicle accidents in Alaska during 1985, 1986, and 1987 were not wearing safety belts.

The proposed safety belt use law in Alaska is a secondary offense requiring a motorist be stopped for another offense before a \$15 ticket (which may be donated to emergency medical services) can be levied for not using safety belts.

Secondary enforcement will not impose additional burdens on law enforcement officers responsible for citing motorists under this act. Safety belts reduce traffic fatalities, which are eight times as expensive to investigate as non-injury accidents. In other words, officers would have more time to concentrate on other traffic enforcement programs.

In the past three years Hellenthal Associates has conducted extensive statewide and local polls that show more than 80 percent of Alaskans supporting a safety belt use law.


In the past three years more than 100,000 Alaskans have signed letters of support for the proposed safety belt use law and over 100 businesses have passed supportive resolutions.

The Alaska State House in 1987 passed the safety belt use law with bipartisan support. The Senate in 1988 failed to act on the legislation but 1989 looks more favorable for passage. Supporters of the law include Speaker of the House, Sam Cook, Senate President Tim Kelly, and Governor Steve Cowper.

The statistics, the public support, editorial support of many newspapers and legislative support show that the proposed safety belt use law is one that Alaska can live with.

□ Frank Bickford is executive director of Alaska Safety Belt Use Coalition.

**Anchorage Daily News**



Winner, 1976 Pulitzer Prize Gold Medal for Public Service

Gerald E. Grilly Publisher  
Howard Weaver Managing Editor  
Michael Carey Editorial Page Editor

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

Founded in 1946 by Norman C. Brown

## A way to prevent needless deaths

This year, the legislature has a chance to help fight one of the most serious health problems in the state — and it can do so with very little money or effort.

The health problem is accidental injuries. They are the second leading cause of death for all Alaskans — and the leading cause among young Alaskans. Too many of these deaths come in motor vehicle accidents — some 231 over the past three years.

There's a simple way to cut this carnage on the state's highways: Require people to wear seat belts. Of those 231 victims, 201 were not belted in.

A bill to mandate seat belt use passed the state House last year but never made it to the Senate floor for a vote. This year, with new legislative leadership, prospects for a seat belt law look much better.

In the past, some people have resisted a seat belt law because they see it as an infringement on their personal freedom. Why they object is a mystery. The resulting "intrusion" into people's lives is on a par with a parking ticket — and has considerably more justification. When a parked car overstays its welcome, there's just one less parking space available. When car passengers fail to buckle up, they invite serious injury and death, and increase the costs we all pay for emergency services, insurance and health care.

Alaska's proposed seat belt law offers us all a gentle reminder to do what's good for everyone. The violation would be a secondary offense, meaning that drivers cannot be cited unless they are stopped for some other violation. The fine would be a mere \$15. If violators don't want to send their checks to the government, they can donate the \$15 to emergency medical services.

Seat belts save lives — but only if people wear them. A mandatory seat belt law is a reasonable way to get more people to buckle up.



Tuesday, January 17, 1989

## ***Make it mandatory***

The Legislature could do a simple thing that would save lives, reduce injuries and save money. It could pass a law making the use of safety belts in vehicles mandatory.

Many people don't like the idea of mandatory safety belt laws. The use of safety belts should be a personal choice, they say. The government has no business dictating personal choices.

It's a compelling argument, but not so compelling as the harm that is done by not wearing safety belts. According to a 1987 study, mandatory use of safety belts in Alaska would save 35 lives a year, reduce injuries to more than 600 persons, save \$5 million worth of lost labor and decrease other economic losses associated with highway death and injury by \$13 million. Not just the victims, but everyone pays the cost of not wearing safety belts in terms of increased taxes, insurance premiums and health care costs.

Thirty-one states and the District of Columbia have passed mandatory safety belt laws. In every state, use of safety belts has increased substantially.

Educational programs promoting safety belt use fail to provide the incentive to buckle up that a law requiring it does. We reluctantly move from a position of advocating voluntary compliances to urging the Legislature to make safety belts mandatory. They should, however, avoid some of the problems that Washington state encountered when they initially failed to provide for exemptions for certain types of delivery vehicles.

FAIRBANKS

**Daily News - Miner**

Robert B. Atwood  
President and Publisher

Elaine Atwood  
Assistant Publisher

William J. Tobin  
Vice-President, Editor-in-Chief

# Editorials

## You buckle up in Canada

IN THE for-what-it's-worth department, all the provinces of Canada now have laws making mandatory the use of seat belts by motorists.

Prince Edward Island was the last to join the national movement, putting its mandatory seat belt law into effect this past January.

British Columbia was an early member of the buckle-up brigade, enacting its mandatory law in October 1977. Alberta, among the Western provinces, joined the flock last July.

The reason, of course, is that seat belts save lives — even though their use is a habit that many motorists find hard to adopt.

Arguments that it infringes on personal rights to make it illegal to drive without seat belts are no more valid than saving that requiring a motorist to have a driver's license is an attack on one's liberties.

A bill to make it illegal to

drive in Alaska without seat belts snapped into place was killed in the last legislative session. It died in committee, despite indications that it would have passed given the chance to reach the floor.

ONCE AGAIN, the argument was that it's none of the state's business whether a person buckles up — and that without the requirement, independent Alaskans will do what's right and they don't need the state telling them what to do.

The same Alaskans, however, apparently have no reluctance to fasten their seat belts when they board an airplane — something that also is mandated by the long arm of the law.

And the fact remains that there is more danger of a fatal accident on the highway than there is in the air.

So what's the problem, anyway?

Robert B. Atwood  
President and Publisher

Elaine Atwood  
Assistant Publisher

William J. Tobin  
Vice-President, Editor-in-Chief

# Editorials

The Anchorage Times

May 3, 1988

## Buckle up, and do it now

IN THESE closing days of the lawmaking session, it would be good if the ladies and gentlemen of the legislature would quit fiddling around with lives and buckle up — and make the rest of us do it, too.

None of us complain about wearing seat belts when in airplanes. We're required to do it there.

So what's the big deal about requiring us to do the same when we drive around town or on the highway?

More people are killed on the roads than in airplane crashes. And a lot of those who are weren't wearing safety belts.

For three years now the legislature has had before it bills to make it illegal for drivers and passengers to ride without safety belts fashioned. Each year the effort has died on the sword of individual rights and argu-

ments that the state shouldn't legislate against the risks a person is willing to take with his or her own life.

Baloney.

SEAT BELTS save lives when properly used. It's as simple as that.

And no big felony charge would be involved for those who don't, under this proposed legislation.

All that would be involved is a \$15 fine for offenders.

And even that can be donated to a good cause. At the option of the guilty driver, the fine would go to emergency medical service units — the ambulance drivers and crews who speed to the scene and try to keep alive those injured in accidents.

Enough talk is enough. Pass it and let's get on with adopting a simple new habit.

Robert B. Atwood  
President and Publisher

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## A reasonable request

Have you ever stopped to think what happens in a high-speed car accident when you're not wearing a seat belt?

As the impact propels you from your seat, the first thing you hit is the steering wheel. As it crushes your chest, ribs break, tissue rips, and blood seeps inside your body. Next the windshield delivers a knockout blow to your head. The shattering glass slices your scalp and body as you are thrown from the car.

That grim scenario ought to be enough to persuade every automobile passenger to use seat belts. Unfortunately, it's not.

If the harm from not wearing seat belts were limited to the individual victim, wearing one might be strictly a personal decision. But the consequences of that choice inflict a toll on society too. Fellow citizens help pay the bills through higher costs for health care, insurance, and emergency services.

Given those costs, a coalition of health groups and safety-conscious citizens have proposed a bill to make seat belt use mandatory in Alaska. It's hardly a draconian measure. Passengers could be cited only if the car were stopped for other violations. The fine is a mere \$15, which could be donated to emergency medical services.

But the bill, which has already passed the House, is locked in the crypt known as the Senate State Affairs Committee. The bill is a prisoner of those who say Alaskans have the right to ruin their lives without state interference.

It's true the measure can be considered paternalistic, because it tries to force Alaskans to do what's good for them. But driving public roads is a privilege, not some sacred individual right. A mandatory seat belt law is a reasonable way for the state to make its highways safer and cut the cost of not-so-inevitable bloodshed.

# JUNEAU EMPIRE

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5-4-88

## Seatbelt bill should be passed

**L**odged within the bowels of the Alaska Legislature is a bill that, plain and simple, would save lives. It is the seatbelt bill.

Opponents say any law requiring Alaskans to buckle their seatbelt is an infringement on their "civil liberties." They say that if they want to increase the likelihood of being injured or killed in an automobile accident by 15 to 25 percent, then that's their business.

Wrong. In fact, all of us pay the price of those individuals who cherish their "civil liberties" more than their lives. According to U.S. Secretary of Transportation Jim Burnley, seatbelt laws save more than the human suffering a serious traffic accident leaves in its wake.

"Belt laws are helping to reduce the staggering societal costs of motor vehicle crashes,

currently estimated to be \$74 billion a year," he wrote in USA Today. That includes medical, municipal and state services, increased insurance expenses and other public expenditures.

The cost of not having a seatbelt law can be estimated in blood, too. If all 50 states had seatbelt laws, Secretary Burnley estimates 3,100 lives would have been saved last year alone. That is more than the population of Wrangell killed because of the lack of seatbelt laws.

What is this "threat" to our "civil liberties" that the Alaska Senate is protecting us from? The bill now bottled up in the Senate State Affairs Committee would make driving without wearing a seatbelt an secondary offense. That means you could not be stopped by a police officer solely for not wearing a seatbelt. But if you were stopped for another traffic offense and didn't have your seatbelt fastened, you would have to pay a \$15 fine or donate that amount to emergency medical services.

Pardon us, but that is hardly an infringement on anyone's civil liberties. All it would do is heighten public awareness of the need to wear seatbelts.

Thirty-two states and Washington, D.C., have seatbelt laws. Obviously, those lawmakers know that any law that saves so many lives makes good sense.

Hopefully, Alaska's lawmakers would agree - if they ever got a chance to vote on the bill.

What happens if Alaska's legislators don't pass a seatbelt law this year? More people will die, more people will be injured, and the next legislature will have to do what this one refused to.

Pass a seatbelt law.  
Please.

**ISSUE:** Should  
Alaska have a seat-  
belt use law?

# The Case for Safety Belt Use

*Flaw is lack of education*  
*most of physicians*

Safety belts have been required equipment for automobiles in the United States for 20 years. But it has been only recently that Americans have made extensive use of these effective devices. As recently as 1982, only 11% of American motorists were "buckling up." Today, 31 states and the District of Columbia have safety belt use laws on the books, and overall belt use is estimated to be at an all-time high of 46%.

See also pp 3593 and 3598.

The primary reason for this turnabout has been a refocusing of highway safety efforts, to concentrate more on drivers themselves rather than just on regulating manufacturers. Former Secretary of Transportation Elizabeth Dole settled a 15-year-long battle over air bags in 1984. Her solution: if states representing more than two thirds of the population enacted safety belt laws, manufacturers would not be required to install air bags or automatic safety belts. The auto industry has since lobbied intensively for safety belt laws in the state legislatures. The Department of Transportation and other groups, such as Traffic Safety Now and the American Coalition for Traffic Safety, have also waged a large-scale public information campaign promoting safety belt use.

The results are clear. Increased safety belt use has saved an estimated 11 000 lives since 1984, and tens of thousands of serious injuries have been prevented. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that front-seat lap-shoulder belts are highly effective in protecting occupants in a crash, reducing the risk of death by 40% to 50% and the risk of moderate to serious injury by 45% to 55%.<sup>1</sup> These estimates were based on extensive data on crash and injury experience over the past decade.

Physicians and other professionals in the medical and public health fields can also play a key role in increasing safety belt usage. According to national health statistics, not only are motor vehicle crashes the leading cause of death among 5- to 34-year-olds, they account for the greatest number of productive years of life lost and are the most costly source of disability in the United States. Yet, a survey<sup>2</sup> of 209 Texas family physicians revealed that only 5% said they routinely ask their patients about safety belts. Fifty-eight percent neither advise nor discuss the risk, even when they are aware of nonuse. These physicians ranked nonuse of safety belts as less of a risk factor than smoking, obesity, excessive use of alcohol, high blood pressure, stress, lack of exercise, and a high-fat diet.

However, the American Academy of Family Physicians plans to introduce a continuing medical education course for physicians next year on how motor vehicle trauma can be reduced through patient education on the importance of using safety belts, child safety seats, and the extra protection provided by air bags. There is no doubt that increased safety belt education, especially among school-age children, will prove beneficial. Recent observations of 212 school-age children at a pediatric clinic dramatically demonstrated the influence of a physician's message to his or her young patients and parents on the importance of using safety belts.<sup>3</sup> It was found that 38% of the young patients who received counseling were then observed wearing their belts, compared with 5% of those who

did not receive counseling.

Much more remains to be done to increase safety belt use across the country. Currently, surveys indicate that belt use in states with belt laws averages about 50%, but also varies widely from state to state, from 68% in Hawaii to only 27% in Tennessee.<sup>4</sup> The most dramatic, sustained increases in safety belt use appear to have been in those communities where there is a combination of intensive law enforcement and public information and education. Not surprisingly, belt use is generally lower in states without belt laws, but those states also show substantial variance. And we know that many countries have attained very high safety belt use rates—such as 80% in Australia and parts of Canada and 95% in Great Britain and West Germany. We are therefore convinced that there are great opportunities for further increases in belt use all across America.

Our goal at the Department of Transportation and the goal of a wide spectrum of safety groups across America is to attain a national safety belt usage rate of 70% by 1990.

There has never been any question that safety belts and child safety seats are extremely effective in saving lives and reducing injuries. The problem has been convincing motorists to use them every time they get into their cars and trucks. When the National Transportation Safety Board reported in a 1986 study<sup>5</sup> that use of rear-seat lap belts could cause injury in some crashes, some people mistakenly assumed that they were safer not wearing a belt at all. Nothing could be further from the truth. Our crash data conclusively show that lap-only safety belts are quite effective in reducing the risk of death and injury to occupants compared with wearing no belt at all. Furthermore, car manufacturers are now voluntarily taking the initiative to improve protection for rear-seat occupants even further by installing lap-shoulder belts as standard equipment in virtually all new cars by 1990.

The outlook on safety belt use is encouraging. More and more Americans are buckling up for safety, and each year more lives are being saved on our highways. But more than half of America's motorists are still unprotected. There is still much work for all of us—in government, in the private sector, and for health professionals—in spreading the important life-saving message of safety belt use.

As administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, I urge physicians and major health care providers, as part of their daily routine, to advise patients about the importance of safety belts and the use of child safety seats to prevent injuries from motor vehicle crashes.

Diane Steed  
 National Highway Traffic  
 Safety Administration  
 Washington, DC

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