

ALASKA LEGISLATURE COMMITTEE FILES 1987-1988 8672

4675 HJUD HB 167

347

Frequency	Are you for or against a safety belt law?	
	For	Against
<b>AREAS OF ALASKA:</b>		
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%
<b>TOTAL ROW PERCENT</b>	<b>65.1%</b>	<b>34.9%</b>

**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.

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## LETTERS

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3-23-87

### Why you should favor seat belt law

Dear Mr. Editor:

I am responding to a letter regarding seat belt requirements. The author was apparently given some wrong information in regards to seat belt requirements for her kids and passengers.

I do believe in required seat belt wearing for everyone. It is not going to do your child much good if you are in a car accident and your child was buckled down and lives and you did not wear a seat belt and the paramedics are picking up body parts off the road.

Be a little realistic also. In the end, everybody pays for people who don't wear seat belts - everybody. Say John Doe smashes into Jane Smith. Jane Smith sues John Doe. Mr. Insurance Man turns around to Mr. John Q. Public to recoup its losses by charging higher insurance rates to all paying customers.

I am a single parent of three children. I wince with pain every time I get a notice from my insurance company because it always says my insurance is going higher because some nimrod with a similar model car has too many accidents, so they must raise my rate. I can only stretch my budget so far before I break.

But the one thing that I always do before I start the car is strap the kids into their seats or car seats, willingly or unwillingly. My oldest daughter is so good about having her seat belt put on that when I forget to put hers or mine on she will tell me, "Mom, our seat belts; if we don't put on our seat belts the cops will give us a ticket and take you to jail." The five seconds it takes to strap your child into its seat could mean the difference between a lifetime of sorrow or a lifetime of happiness.

I don't know where the letter writer got her information about who sits

where and on who or "there is no provision for that," but she ought to try going up to the legislature and obtaining a copy of the bill mandating car seats or seat belts for children up to seven years of age. First of all, the seat belt law does not apply to kids or people who are riding a community bus or school bus. I believe that if you have a five-seater car with seven people to squeeze into those seats, you put what you can into those five seats. You would not be penalized for the two children who could not fit into a seat. I also believe that if you do have a child who is handicapped, there are special provisions. And, never put two children inside the same seat belt; that does more harm than good.

As for a child sitting on his mother's lap and being happy or a child buckled into his seat screaming and crying and making the driver nervous and on edge, try to imagine a very large brick with several hundred pounds of pressure per square inch squashing you. That is what it would feel to a child with his parent's weight crushing it. I would tend to let (and in fact I do) my child(ren) scream their little brains out all they wanted. I'd rather be deaf than have them dead because I didn't particularly care to listen to them scream. I realize that it is frustrating at times. There are times that I would like to super glue their lips shut or put a large strip of duct tape over their lips before we get into the car. In fact, it gets so frustrating sometimes that I join in screaming with them. When they all stop and all turn around and look at me like who is this strange woman driving this car? Then they either laugh at me or we have a fun game to see who screams the loudest.

In summation, I could think of a lot more other things I would complain about and things that I don't like besides a seat belt law. Remember, a seat belt could save your life. It saved mine. I went over a 160-foot cliff with one on, and lived. One other person didn't have one on and he died. I am very lucky to be alive today and I want to continue living to see my children grow up happy and healthy.

Put their seat belt on, show them you care.

Sincerely,  
Dara L. Miller  
Juneau

# Letters to the Editor

*The Daily News-Miner welcomes letters to the editor, P.O. Box 710, Fairbanks, AK 99707. Each letter must carry the name and address of the writer, which will be published. Letters that are libelous or in poor taste will be rejected. Thank-you letters will be published in the "Applause" column. Because of space limitations, the following rules generally apply: A letter may not be longer than 350 words. Copies of letters from one person to another will not be published. No one may publish more than one letter per month. Political endorsement letters from outside our readership area will not be published. The Daily News-Miner reserves the right to edit or reject any letter submitted.*

Seat belt law

3/17/87

March 5, 1987  
P.O. Box 72928  
Fairbanks, AK 99707

To the editor:

Requiring seat belts to be worn is no more a threat to our civil liberties than requiring motorists to obey stop signs and traffic lights. Seat belts, as well as stop signs and traffic lights, have proved to be important factors in reducing deaths and injuries in traffic 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 \$37.50. 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.

Safety belt use can reduce the chances of deaths and serious injuries in automobile accidents by 50 percent. It can also lessen the burden shared by families, loved ones, taxpayers and employers after a needless death or injury caused by an accident on our roads and highways. And, experience has shown that high belt use can only be attained in states with safety belt laws.

A safety belt use law in Alaska will cause people to buckle up who otherwise would not.

Sincerely,  
Ron Miller

# Letters to the Editor

Wednesday, February 25, 1987

4—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 airplane 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**

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FEB 23 1987

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## 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  
Times

### 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



ALASKA CLIPPING  
SERVICE

Frontiersman  
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 Heich, 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 Brewster

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 rail 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 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

ALASKA CLIPPING  
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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-

dent June 26th near Spaulding Beach 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 to no avail. 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 ambu-

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

The following people testified in  
FAVOR of HB 167 ON 3/20/87 (HOUSE STATE  
AFFAIRS)

FAUN HELMS } FAIRBANKS  
DON CALLAHAN }

MARK BRYANT (RACE CAR DRIVER - HOBBY)

TOM SCOTT (EMS SOUTHCENTRAL)

BECKY JUDD (Alaska Council on Alcohol & DRUG ABUSE)

BUSAN FLOOD (Alaska TREATMENT CENTER)

MIKE MILLER (Former Representative)

ROCKY PROTIVICK (Alaska Lung Assn.)

Commissioner NIX (Public Safety)

FRANK BICKFORD (Alaska Safety Belt Use Coalition)

Shannon Sexton

JULIA CARLTON } JUNEAU/NOGOLAS HO.S. COALITION  
COORDINATORS

MARK JOHNSON - EMS

JOHN MANNING - EMS

Three people testified AGAINST.

DANISE MCKINNEY from Kotchikew and JOE HAYES from →

Arbitrage (foreign representation) were out of town and sent in supporting statements.

# 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

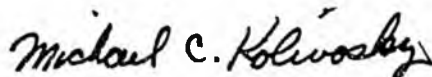
March 3, 1986

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

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

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.

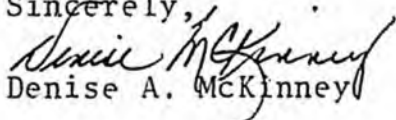
I have always advocated freedom of choice and the rights of the individual, and will continue to do so as long as the individual making the decision is the only person affected by the outcome. However, in the case of safety restraints, the decision not to use them by one person has the potential of injuring 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 A. McKinney

Joe L. Hayes

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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.

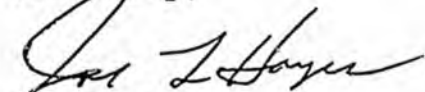
Representative Fran Ulmer

-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

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

cy to: All Alaskan Legislators

Joe L. Hayes

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6

March 11, 1987

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

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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.

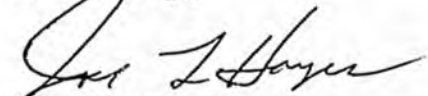
Representative Fran Ulmer

-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

# 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 tumbled 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<sup>☆</sup>

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 1987

## Seat belt law common sense

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

It shouldn't require legislation, but according to a recent poll, most Alaskans believe it should. 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.

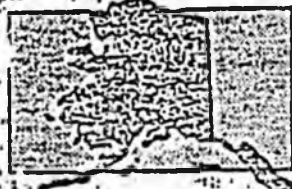
Jaywalking is illegal, and so are other acts that can be dangerous. How, then, is driving without seat belts fastened, which is just as dangerous, different?

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

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**ISSUE:** Is a seat belt law needed in Alaska?

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# 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 1987 to 1971

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

## 3/13/86 Buckle up or pay price

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



Winner, 1976 Pulitzer Prize Gold Medal for Public Service

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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 1986

ALASKA CLIPPING  
SERVICE

Anchorage Times  
Anchorage, AK

## A matter of life and death

63. 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  
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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.

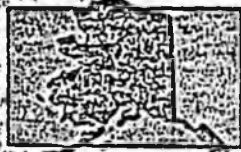
A small number of people have railed against the idea of mandating that Alaskans wear seat belts. They say it is a violation of their rights and that government has no business telling them what to do, even when it comes to personal safety.

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 irreplaceable 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

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Wednesday, February 25, 1987

4—Fairbanks Daily News-Miner, Fairbanks, Alaska

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## 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**

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**FEB 23 1987**

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## **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  
MINEER*

## 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



ALASKA CLIPPING  
SERVICE

Frontiersman  
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 Heich, 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 rail 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

gent June 26th near Spaulding Beach 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 to no avail. 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 ambu-

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 Debbie 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 39 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

**A**fter Sept. 11, 1964, 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 know 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 Laraine, 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 along her youngest, 1-year-old Nathaniel, on this 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 'Knobby's going to seat 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 would have been 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 that's the only reason 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 earthy ideas 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 \$26, plus outlet fee, available at all Budget Tables and Records, Tickets Inc., the Elmendorf Recreation Center and the arena box office. (258-7915)

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Anchorage Times

Anchorage, AK

AUG 24 1986

← 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, 28 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

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**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 Bickel

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 north 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 30 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 25 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 26 percent. State police in Michigan recently reported the first weekend without a traffic fatality in 10 years — more than 300 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, 126 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 involved in tractor trailer rig 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 \$37.50. 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 23-16 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 28.5 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

TUNE 30, 1986

ON THE NIGHT before she died, Deboreah Williams went shopping with friends in downtown Fairbanks. Deboreah, a vivacious 25-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 Deboreah put on a seat belt.

Deboreah 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 sit there for about 10 minutes," Fawn said. "I wouldn't move my car until she finally puts her seat belt 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** Deboreah 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 Deboreah warned Assemblyman Joe Siltton that if he kept refusing to get



**DEBOREAH WILLIAMS**  
Friend knew why

a picture of himself taken, she would put a photo of Mickey Mouse in Siltton'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 Deboreah 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 Deboreah's relatives live in Indianapolis, but others disagreed. Her friends are her family," said Borough Clerk Mona Dressler.

They said Deboreah 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 12-speed she got to ride to work one time.

**ON THE MORNING** of Saturday June 21 at 7:20 a.m., Deboreah 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 a 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 9 Mile Richardson Highway and an overturned car.

Deboreah 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 Deboreah 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, Deboreah's friend Fawn, the 21-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.

Deboreah'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 81211, 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 Deboreah 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 Deboreah, what a beautiful candidate the good Lord has," he said.

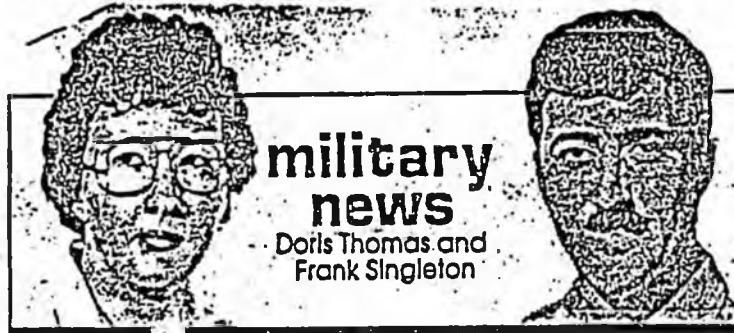
Anchorage Daily

News

Anchorage, AK

JUL 16 1986

# 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

## Deborah Williams: a tragedy that didn't have to happen



susan nightingale

Deborah 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 23 years old when she died, nine weeks ago today.

Deborah's friend, Faun Helms, remembers the night before Deborah 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."

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

joints and nervous system. When Deborah'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. Deborah had even started to exercise and lose the weight the medicine helped put on.

Although Deborah claimed her lupus would make buckling up in Helms' car too uncomfortable, Helms was adamant. Because Deborah'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, huffing and

puffing, she buckled up."

That over with, the friends enjoyed an evening of shopping and socializing. The last time Helms saw Deborah 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, Deborah 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 seat belt.

Deborah Williams never regained consciousness. She died the next day. And that's how Deborah 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,

85 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 30 lives a year would be saved, there'd be 700 fewer traffic injuries, and Alaskans would save \$13 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 Deborah 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 clip, pins about Deborah being a part of it? "I hope it does some good."

□ Susan Nightingale is a Daily News columnist.

## 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 Kellenthal 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

ALASKA CLIPPING SERVICE

Chugiak-Eagle River Star  
Eagle River, AK

OCT 24 1985

# 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 in 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 that lost employee time and work compensation payments be 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.

# Miller pushes belt bill

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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.

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



# 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 Hellenhal, hired by the coalition to determine how Alaskans feel about the proposed law, reports that 68 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

<sup>63</sup>  
**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

**E**lmendorf 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 Blickford, 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

SI

## No seat belt means smaller injury claim

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

2/11/87

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE,

FYI,

SINCERELY,

FRANK BICKFORD



30. HB 167 (Cotten, et al) An Act relating to mandatory use of safety devices in motor vehicles

A. State affairs, Judiciary

B. Status: House Floor

C. SA: CS - 4 do pass, 1 no rec

D. JUD: CS 4 do pass, 2 no rec, 1 do not pass

E. Testified:

1) Mark Johnson, EMS

2) Public Safety

F. Judiciary CS Sectional:

1) Sec 1: Repeals and reenacts safety belt law

a) Safety belts - new section

1> makes it illegal for anyone 16 or older to occupy a motor vehicle without wearing a safety belt

2> Makes it illegal for anyone to operate a motor vehicle without wearing a safety belt (e.g. 14, 15 year-olds)

b) Child safety seats section - unchanged from present

c) Exceptions - rural exemption removed

1> emergency vehicles exempt

2> Mail & newspapers

3> Handicapped individuals may be exempted by the commissioner

4> Vehicle not equipped w/belts

d) May not remove belts to avoid law

e) Secondary enforcement only - peace officer may not stop a motor vehicle to determine compliance with (a). (Primary enforcement still allowed for child seats)

2) Sec 2. Allows commissioner to exempt persons if use is impractical because of physical or medical conditions.

3) Sec 3. Penalties

a) for violation of (a) (seat belts) An infraction only, \$15 fine max, no demerit points

b) violations of (b) child safety seats - same as present law - an infraction, max fine \$300, max 2 demerit points, offender may provide proof of acquisition of child safety device and the court shall dismiss the citation, unless:

1> prior conviction

2> prior bail forfeiture

3> Prior provision of proof of acquisition

BILL NO: CS HB 167 (SA)

DATE: April 1, 1987

TITLE: An Act relating to  
mandatory use of safety devices

CONTACT: Ellen Moore

DEPARTMENT OF  
PUBLIC SAFETY  
POSITION PAPER

In the jurisdictions that have had the longest experience with safety belt use laws, it has been found that the greater the level of increase in seatbelt use, the greater the reduction in fatalities and serious injuries. Correspondingly, the more stringent the law, the higher the compliance.

The Committee Substitute (State Affairs) for House Bill 167 provides for "secondary" enforcement of the proposed safety belt statute as well as the existing child restraint statute. It is the position of the Highway Safety Planning Agency that this weakens the extremely successful child restraint law. In fact, such a provision may reverse the trend toward increased safety belt use that began about the time the child restraint law went into effect.

We recommend that the child restraint section [AS 28.05.095(b)] be extended to cover children up to age sixteen. Without this change, it would be possible to issue a citation to a child as young as seven years old. We also recommend that the so-called secondary enforcement section be revised to include only adult belt use. Violation of the child restraint section would remain a "primary" offense.

Finally, AS 28.05.099(a) reduces the fine for a violation of the child restraint law from a possible \$300 to \$15. We are neutral on this change, but we believe that Sec. 28.05.099(b), which provides for dismissal on proof of "correction", should be repealed if mail-in-bail for this offense is established.

  
William R. Nix  
Acting Commissioner

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

# 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 C-S 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 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 zero fiscal note [ ] same as previous zero fiscal note published \_\_\_\_\_
- zero with analysis

**SIGNING TO PASS:**

[Signature]

Cliff Davidson

[Signature]

[Signature]

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**SIGNING OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Terry Hunter - No Rec.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

[Signature]  
Chairman's signature

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

**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						
<b>TOTAL OPERATING</b>	<b>-0-</b>	<b>-0-</b>	<b>-0-</b>	<b>-0-</b>	<b>-0-</b>	<b>-0-</b>

<b>CAPITAL</b>	<b>-0-</b>	<b>-0-</b>	<b>-0-</b>	<b>-0-</b>	<b>-0-</b>	<b>-0-</b>
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<b>REVENUE</b>	<b>-0-</b>	<b>-0-</b>	<b>-0-</b>	<b>-0-</b>	<b>-0-</b>	<b>-0-</b>
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**FUNDING: (Thousands of Dollars)**

GENERAL FUND						
FEDERAL FUNDS						
OTHER						
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>-0-</b>	<b>-0-</b>	<b>-0-</b>	<b>-0-</b>	<b>-0-</b>	<b>-0-</b>

**POSITIONS:**

FULL-TIME						
PART-TIME						
<b>TEMPORARY</b>	<b>-0-</b>	<b>-0-</b>	<b>-0-</b>	<b>-0-</b>	<b>-0-</b>	<b>-0-</b>

**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: *Walter M. Murrain*  
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**

REQUEST: \_\_\_\_\_

Bill Version : HB 167  
Publish Date : \_\_\_\_\_

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						
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REVENUE	-0-	15.0	15.0	15.0	15.0	15.0
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**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)

*JML*  
*3/13/87*

Prepared by: Ellen Moore *EM*  
Division: Alaska Highway Safety Planning Agency

Phone: 465-1375  
Date: 3/10/87

Approved by Commissioner: *Y* *harrill*  
Agency: Dept. of Public Safety

Date: 3/15/87

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

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 provided in (c) of this section, a person may not occupy a motor vehicle while in operation unless restrained by a safety belt.

10

11

12

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

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(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 delivering mail or newspapers from inside the vehicle to roadside mail or newspaper boxes;

26

27

28

(3) a person or class of persons exempted by regulation

29

under AS 28.05.096;

*MAX question*

*16 years old ML*

*16 ML*

*requires school bus under 10 pass*

*Must exemptions*

*deleted*

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(1).

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

*M. K. ...*

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. *driver*

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.

THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENT HAS  
NOT BEEN FILMED BUT IS  
AVAILABLE IN THE ORIGINAL  
FILE

# BUCKLE UP

A PUBLICATION OF TRAFFIC SAFETY NOW, INC.

■ SOCIETY FOOTS \$42 BILLION BILL FOR UNBUCKLED VICTIMS—page 3

■ BUCKLING UP SLASHES SOCIAL COSTS—page 2

■ CORPORATE AMERICA BUCKLES UP EMPLOYEES—page 3

## Belt laws spark U.S. health trend Safety belts save lives

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



**SAVED BY BELT:** Police officer Robin Kane's car was struck in the rear.

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

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