



February 6, 2024

The Honorable Thomas Walsh, Chair  
The Honorable Ted Gorski, Vice Chair  
House Transportation Committee  
New Hampshire General Court  
107 North Main Street  
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

Dear Chair Walsh and Vice Chair Gorski:

Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety (Advocates), an alliance of consumer, safety, medical, public health and law enforcement groups and insurance companies working together to pass highway and auto safety laws that prevent crashes, save lives, reduce injuries, and contain costs, supports enactment of House Bill (HB) 1467. This legislation would improve protections for child passengers.

Motor vehicle crashes are a leading cause of death for children in the United States.<sup>i</sup> An average of over three children under age 14 were killed and about 445 were injured every day in traffic crashes in 2021 – amounting to a total of 1,184 fatalities and 162,298 others injured.<sup>ii</sup> Improperly restrained children traveling in vehicles present a serious yet fixable public health problem. Across all age groups, injury risk is lowest (less than two percent) when children are placed in an age-appropriate restraint in the rear seat.<sup>iii</sup> Use of appropriate child passenger safety seats is 47 percent effective in preventing fatalities for ages 1-3 in all crashes, 43 percent effective in preventing fatalities for ages 3-5 in all crashes, and 67 percent effective in preventing serious to critical injuries for ages 5-8 in all crashes.<sup>iv</sup> More than 325 lives were saved in 2017 by restraining children four and younger in passenger vehicles.<sup>v</sup>

This measure enhances safety by recognizing that children at various stages of development need different protection. HB 1467 will ensure children use the appropriate safety seat:

- Through at least age two and weighing less than 30 pounds in a rear-facing five-point harness safety seat;
- Under age four and weighing less than 40 pounds in a rear-facing five-point harness safety seat or a forward-facing system (FFS) for children who outgrow rear-facing height or weight recommendations;
- Under eight years old but older than five and less than 57 inches must be in a FFS with a five-point harness until the child exceeds height and weight recommendations and then must be in a booster seat until reaching 57 inches in height, children remain in a booster until a seat belt can fit; and,
- All children under 13 years of age ride in the rear.

When children are in a safety seat that is appropriate for their age and size, their chance of being killed or seriously injured is greatly reduced.

We urge you to advance HB 1467, legislation that will better protect the youngest and most vulnerable passengers.

Sincerely,

Catherine Chase, President

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- <sup>i</sup> WISQARS, Leading Causes of Death Reports, 1981-2020, 2020, Top 10 leading causes of death, Ages 1 to 14, available at <https://wisqars.cdc.gov/fatal-leading>.
- <sup>ii</sup> Traffic Safety Facts 2021 Data: Children, NHTSA May 2023, DOT HS 813 456, available at <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813456>.
- <sup>iii</sup> Risk of Child Injury by Seat Row and Restraint Type, 1998-2002, Age 0-12 years, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, 2014. Available at [https://injury.research.chop.edu/sites/default/files/documents/seat\\_row\\_0.pdf](https://injury.research.chop.edu/sites/default/files/documents/seat_row_0.pdf).
- <sup>iv</sup> Evaluation of Child Restraint System Effectiveness, NHTSA, December 2020, DOT HS 813 047, available at <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813047>.
- <sup>v</sup> Traffic Safety Facts 2020: A Compilation of Motor Vehicle Crash Data, NHTSA, Oct. 2022, DOT HS 813 375, available at <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813375>.