



May 17, 2024

The Honorable Jared Polis
Governor of Colorado
Office of the Governor
State Capitol Building
200 E. Colfax Avenue, Rm. 136
Denver, Colorado 80203

Dear Governor Polis:

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, respectfully requests you sign into law House Bill (HB) 1055 to enhance protections for child passengers. When children are properly restrained in a safety seat that is appropriate for their age and size, their chance of being killed or seriously injured in a car crash is greatly reduced.

Motor vehicle crashes are a leading cause of death for children in the United States.ⁱ An average of over three children under age 14 were killed and about 429 were injured every day in traffic crashes in 2022 – amounting to a total of 1,129 fatalities and an estimated 156,502 others injured.ⁱⁱ 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.ⁱⁱⁱ 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.^{iv} More than 325 lives were saved in 2017, the most recent year for which an estimate is available, by restraining children four and younger in passenger vehicles.^v

HB 1055 will improve the current child passenger safety law by increasing the ages of requirements for rear-facing safety seats, booster seats, and seat belts or child restraints. In addition, the legislation will require children under nine years of age to be in rear seats where they are safest. Advocates supports these upgrades and encourages the state to continue its progress toward an optimal child passenger safety law.

We appreciate your consideration and ask you to sign HB 1055 into law to enhance the safety of our most vulnerable passengers.

Sincerely,

Catherine Chase, President

ⁱ 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>.

ⁱⁱ Traffic Safety Facts 2022 Data: Children, NHTSA May 20243, DOT HS 813 575456, available at <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813575>.

ⁱⁱⁱ 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.

^{iv} Evaluation of Child Restraint System Effectiveness, NHTSA, December 2020, DOT HS 813 047, available at <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813047>.

^v 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>.