



January 22, 2026

The Honorable Nathaniel Ledbetter, Speaker of the House  
The Honorable Chris Pringle, Speaker Pro Tempore  
The Honorable Scott Stadthagen, Majority Leader  
The Honorable Anthony Daniels, Minority Leader  
Alabama House  
11 South Union Street  
Montgomery, Alabama 36130

Dear Speaker Ledbetter, Speaker Pro Tempore Pringle, Majority Leader Stadthagen and Minority Leader Daniels:

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) 32 to establish protections for child passengers. However, we recommend an amendment to improve the bill and enhance the safety of child passengers.

Motor vehicle crashes are among the leading causes of death for children under age 14 in the U.S.<sup>1</sup> In 2023, 1,019 children ages 14 and younger were killed in traffic crashes, which is three pediatric deaths each day on average.<sup>2</sup> An estimated additional 161,478 children were injured in 2023, equating to 442 harmed children each day.<sup>3</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>4</sup> Use of appropriate child passenger safety seats is very effective in preventing injury: 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>5</sup>

HB 32 will improve the child passenger safety law by requiring children to be restrained in a rear-facing safety seat until at least age two and children who outgrow a rear-facing safety seat to be secured in a forward-facing child restraint system until at least five years old or 65 pounds. Advocates supports these upgrades which are consistent with best practices identified by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and others.

We suggest improving the bill's booster seat provision. The AAP identifies the best practice for transitioning out of a booster seat and into a seat belt is "typically when they have reached 4 ft 9 inches in height and are between 8 and 12 y. of age."<sup>6</sup> This recommendation is supported by growth charts for the average development of children which find that more than 95 percent of boys and girls are less than 4 feet 9 inches in height at age nine.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, in the vast majority of cases, the transition from a booster seat to seat belts should occur beyond age eight and accordingly, we support an amendment to require booster seats for children until they are at least eight years old and 4 ft 9 inches.

We appreciate your consideration and urge you to upgrade and advance HB 32 to enhance the safety of our most vulnerable passengers.

Sincerely,

Catherine Chase, President

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<sup>1</sup> WISQARS, 10 Leading Causes of Death, Unites States 2023, available [here](#), last queried Aug. 2025.

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- <sup>2</sup> Traffic Safety Facts 2023 Data: Children, NHTSA April 2025, DOT HS 813 712, available at <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813712>.
- <sup>3</sup> Traffic Safety Facts 2023 Data: Children, NHTSA April 2025, DOT HS 813 712, available at <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813712>.
- <sup>4</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>5</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>6</sup> Durbin D, Hoffman B. Child Passenger Safety. AAP policy statement from Council on Injury Violence and Poison Prevention. Pediatrics. 2018b;142(5):e20182460. Available at <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2018-2460>.
- <sup>7</sup> Clinical Growth Charts, National Center for Health Statistics, Centers for Disease Control, available at [https://www.cdc.gov/growthcharts/clinical\\_charts.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/growthcharts/clinical_charts.htm).