



February 12, 2026

The Honorable Pat Grassley, Speaker
The Honorable Bobby Kaufmann, Majority Leader
The Honorable John H. Wills, Speaker Pro Tempore
The Honorable Brian Meyer, Minority Leader
Iowa House
Iowa Legislature
1007 East Grand Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

Dear Speaker Grassley, Majority Leader Kaufmann, Speaker Pro Tempore Wills and Minority Leader Meyer:

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 File (HF) 2344 to improve 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 among the leading causes of death for children under age 14 in the U.S.¹ In 2023, 1,019 children ages 14 and younger were killed in traffic crashes, which is three pediatric deaths each day on average.² An estimated additional 161,478 children were injured in 2023, equating to 442 harmed children each day.³ 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.⁴ 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.⁵

HF 2344 will improve the child passenger safety law by requiring children to be restrained in a rear-facing safety seat until age two and children to be secured by a child passenger restraint system until age eight.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), children younger than two years old are at an elevated risk of head and spine injuries in motor vehicle crashes because their heads are relatively large and their necks smaller with weak musculature.⁶ By supporting the entire torso, neck, head and pelvis, a rear facing car seat distributes crash forces over the entire body rather than focusing them only at belt contact points.⁷ When a child is placed in a rear facing car seat through age two or older, they are provided with optimal support for their head and neck in the event of a crash.⁸ Without the optimal support provided by a rear facing car seat, a young child is at risk of having their spinal cord stretched during a collision which can lead to serious injury or death.⁹

The public is keenly aware and concerned about the safety of child passengers. A 2024 poll commissioned by Advocates found that 84 percent of Americans are “concerned,” with 62 percent “extremely” or “very” concerned about lack of seat belt or child safety seat use.¹⁰ These fears are borne out by the relatively high level of traffic fatalities involving unrestrained young children, many of which could have been averted with proper restraints. In 2023, 28 percent of children younger than one year old and 27 percent of children ages 1-3 killed in passenger vehicles were unrestrained, when restraint use was known.¹¹

We appreciate your consideration and urge you to support and advance HF 2344 to enhance the safety of our most vulnerable passengers.

Sincerely,



Catherine Chase, President

cc: Majority Whip Henry Stone, Minority Whip Sean Bagniewski

-
- 1 WISQARS, 10 Leading Causes of Death, Unites States 2023, available [here](#), last queried Aug. 2025.
 - 2 Traffic Safety Facts 2023 Data: Children, NHTSA April 2025, DOT HS 813 712, available at <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813712>.
 - 3 Traffic Safety Facts 2023 Data: Children, NHTSA April 2025, DOT HS 813 712, available at <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813712>.
 - 4 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.
 - 5 Evaluation of Child Restraint System Effectiveness, NHTSA, December 2020, DOT HS 813 047, available at <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813047>.
 - 6 Policy Statement – Child Passenger Safety, American Academy of Pediatrics, Committee on Injury, Violence, and Poison Prevention, 201 available at <https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/142/5/e20182460>.
 - 7 Policy Statement – Child Passenger Safety, American Academy of Pediatrics, Committee on Injury, Violence, and Poison Prevention, 201 available at <https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/142/5/e20182460>.
 - 8 Policy Statement – Child Passenger Safety, American Academy of Pediatrics, Committee on Injury, Violence, and Poison Prevention, 201 available at <https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/142/5/e20182460>.
 - 9 Car Seat Safety: Newborn to 2 Years, the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, available at <https://www.chop.edu/centers-programs/car-seat-safety-kids/car-seat-safety-by-age/newborn-2-years>.
 - 10 Engine's Caravan Survey Public Opinion Poll, December 2024, available [here](#).
 - 11 Traffic Safety Facts 2023 Data: Children, NHTSA April 2025, DOT HS 813 712, available at <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813712>.