



*Connecticut's Partner in Brain Injury Prevention & Recovery for over 30 Years*

***February 23, 2015***

***Transportation Committee Public Hearing***

***Julie Peters, CBIS, Executive Director***

The Brain Injury Alliance of Connecticut is submitting this testimony in support of ***RB 6821 An Act Concerning Department of Transportation Recommendations regarding...Passenger Seat Belts***. The Brain Injury Alliance is a statewide nonprofit organization that serves thousands of Connecticut citizens and their families impacted by brain injuries every year.

***Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of brain injury.*** According to the American College of Emergency Physicians:

- Every hour someone dies in America simply because of not wearing a seat belt. Failure to buckle up contributes to more fatalities than any other single behavior.
- In a 55-miles-per-hour crash, a back-seat passenger of average size, not wearing a seat belt, would fly forward with a force of 3,000 pounds – enough to seriously injure or kill other passengers.
- Society bears 85 percent of the costs of crashes. The needless deaths and injuries that result from not using seat belts cost society an estimated \$26 billion annually in medical care, lost productivity, and other costs.
- Traumatic brain injury is the leading cause of death and disability in children. It is estimated that 165,000 children will be hospitalized due to a head injury in the US this year.

The facts are clear. Seatbelts save lives and should be worn by all occupants of a vehicle. Every day at the Brain Injury Alliance we receive calls from brain injury survivors and their family members. The stories are always heart-wrenching. Relationships and employment suffer. Brain injuries can't be cured, and they don't go away. If we can prevent a few more brain injuries in Connecticut by requiring the use of seatbelts by all occupants of motor vehicles, we will truly be saving lives.