



CONNECTICUT POLICE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION

365-1A Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield, Connecticut 06109

(860) 324-5726 (860) 324-6285 Fax: (860) 529-4265

www.cpcanet.org

Testimony to the Joint Committee on Transportation, February 23, 2015

Senator Maynard, Senator Leone, Representative Guerrero, Representative Arce, and distinguished members of the Joint Committee on Transportation. We represent the interests of Connecticut's municipal and university police chiefs and respectfully submit to you this testimony regarding Section 14 of proposed HB 6821.

Proposed H.B. 6821 Sec. 14 – An Act Concerning Department of Transportation Recommendations Regarding...Passenger Seat Belts.

The Connecticut Police Chiefs Association supports Section 14 of this omnibus bill. Section 14 amends existing law by including rear seat passengers in the State's mandate for wearing safety belts. The goal of this provision is to reduce passenger injury and increase the rate of survivability in the event of a crash.

- Wearing a seat belt is the single most effective means of saving lives and reducing injuries in motor vehicle crashes (see attached lit review).
 - Nationally, seat belt use in rear seats is lower (75%) than seat belt use for all occupants (86%) in 2012
 - Seat belt use in the rear seat continued to be significantly lower among occupants 16 to 24 than other age groups in 2012
 - Seat belt use in the rear seat continued to be significantly higher among the States with laws requiring belts to be used in all seating positions than those without such laws

Source: <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/811872.pdf>

- 20 states and DC have standard seat belt enforcement law for all vehicle occupants (see attached AAA chart).
 - Studies have shown that seat belt use in rear seats continued to be higher among states with laws requiring belt use in all seating positions. (Although most of the evidence is based upon studies of front seat occupants.) (<http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/811691.pdf>)
- IIHS highlighted a [study](#) that found, among other things, that risk of serious injury was nearly 8 times higher among unrestrained rear-row occupants as compared with those using restraints. This was especially important because some of the most vulnerable occupants – children younger than age 13 – accounted for 56 percent of back-seat occupants.
- 2007 NIH [study](#) found that safety belt use was associated with a reduced risk of death for rear car occupants.
- Unbelted occupants can become projectiles in the event of a crash, injuring themselves and other vehicle occupants.

END