

February 23, 2015

Testimony of Dr. D'Andrea Joseph, MD
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To the Transportation Committee regarding House Bill 6821 *An Act Concerning Department of Transportation Recommendations Regarding Maximization of Federal Funds, Rights-of-way, Alternative Project Delivery, Commuter Parking, Amtrak Indemnification, Authority to Condemn Property, Maintenance of Bridges, Passenger Seat Belts, Work Zone Safety Funds and Marine Pilot's Licenses.*

Senator Maynard, Representative Guerrero, members of the Transportation Committee, thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts. My name is Dr. D'Andrea Joseph and I am a trauma and acute care surgeon at Hartford Hospital and an Assistant Professor of Surgery at the University Of Connecticut School Of Medicine.

I am testifying in support of the proposed requirement that any operator or passenger in a motor vehicle wear a seat safety belt. All too often, my trauma center team provides lifesaving care to patients involved in a motor vehicle crash. Here are the facts:

- Unbelted rear seat passengers are at an increased injury risk compared to belted rear seat passengers.
- In the event of a motor vehicle crash, unbelted rear seat passengers are more likely to be ejected from the vehicle and/or become a moving blunt object that can strike other passengers causing serious harm, up to and including death.
- Each year in Connecticut more than 120 adults are injured and approximately 5 adults die who were unbelted rear seat occupants.
- Passenger safety restraints are proven effective in reducing motor vehicle crash injury.
- Legal requirements for safety restraint use result in high rates of compliance.
- Under current law in Connecticut, rear passengers 18 years of age and older are not required to wear a safety belt.
- Revising and upgrading Connecticut law to mandate safety belt use of all occupants (all ages, all seating positions) would help prevent death, injury, and reduce cost among Connecticut road users.

Thank you for taking the time to address this lifesaving measure.

1. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. 2010. Incremental risk of injury and fatality associated with complete ejection. Report concerning Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards, Ejection Mitigation; Phase-In Reporting Requirements. Docket Document No. NHTSA-2009-0183-0054, November 10, 2010. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Transportation.
2. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. 2011. Traffic safety facts, 2009: occupant protection. Report no. DOT HS-811-390. Washington, DC: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.
3. Morgan, C. 1999. Effectiveness of lap/shoulder belts in the back outboard seating positions. Report no. DOT HS-808-945. Washington, DC: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.
4. MacLennan, P.A.; McGwin, Jr., G.; Metzger, J.; Moran, S.G.; and Rue III, L.W. 2004. Risk of injury for occupants of motor vehicle collisions from unbelted occupants. *Injury Prevention* 10(6):363-7.
5. Bose, D.; Arregui-Dalmases, C.; Sanchez-Molina, D.; Velazquez-Ameijide, J.; and Crandall, j. 2013. Increased risk of driver fatality due to unrestrained rear-seat passengers in severe frontal crashes. *Accident Analysis and Prevention* 53:100-4.
6. Safety belts: State Laws as of November 2014. Available at: <http://www.ihs.org/ihs/topics/laws/safetybeltuse?topicName=safety-belts>. Accessed 11/10/14.
7. Connecticut Crash Data Repository. University of Connecticut. Available at: <http://www.ctcrash.uconn.edu/>