



Connecticut's Partner in Brain Injury Prevention & Recovery for over 35 Years

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Public Health Committee Public Hearing

Julie Peters, CBIS, Executive Director

The Brain Injury Alliance of Connecticut is submitting this testimony in support of the rear seatbelt provisions in Sections 16 and 17 of **HB 6484: An Act Concerning Recommendations by the Department of Transportation**. For over 39 years, the Brain Injury Alliance has been a statewide nonprofit organization that serves thousands of Connecticut citizens and their families impacted by brain injuries every year.

Motor vehicle crashes are a leading cause of brain injury.

The facts don't lie

- 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.
- Seat belts are the most effective means of reducing deaths and serious injuries in traffic crashes.
- Safety belts provide the greatest protection against ejection in a crash. Seventy-five percent of people ejected from cars are killed.
- 91 percent of adults say they always wear their seat belt in the front seat, but only 72 percent are just as diligent in the rear.
- Passengers in the rear are three times more likely to die if they aren't wearing a seat belt.
- Nearly 40 percent of people surveyed said they sometimes don't buckle up in the rear seat because there is no law requiring it. If there were such a law, 60 percent of respondents said it would convince them to use belts in the back seat. A greater percentage said they would be more likely to buckle up if the driver could get pulled over because someone in the back wasn't buckled.

- Safety belts saved nearly 15,000 lives during 2016. Approximately 60 percent of passengers killed in traffic crashes were not wearing safety belts
- If everyone buckled up, an additional 2,500 deaths could have been prevented.
- While the back seat is the safest place to ride in a car, unbelted back-seat passengers risk serious injury and pose a potentially fatal threat to others during a crash.

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.

Julie Peters, CBIS
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Brain Injury Alliance of Connecticut

Data obtained and verified by:

Insurance Institute for Highway Safety - <http://www.iihs.org/iihs/news/desktopnews/adults-admit-to-not-always-using-safety-belts-in-the-back-seat-iihs-survey-finds>.

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (<https://www.nhtsa.gov/seat-belts/seat-belts-save-lives>)