



**STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
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IN REPLY REFER TO:

February 23, 2010

TESTIMONY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

HOUSE BILL NO. 2693

COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

The Department of Transportation supports this bill. We believe it will increase child passenger safety on our roads, which is extremely significant, since the Center for Disease Control and Prevention lists motor vehicle crashes as the leading cause of death for kids.

Child safety seats, especially those that are rear-facing, should never be placed in front of an airbag as the airbag deployment can shatter the child safety seat and expose the child to severe injuries or death. Child safety seats should be installed according to the manufacturer's instructions, which say that child safety seats should never be installed in front of an airbag.

We also support the parent receiving the citation instead of the driver of the vehicle. Each parent should take responsibility for their child, no matter who is driving the vehicle.

The Center for disease Control and Prevention makes the following recommendations:

- All children ages 12 years and younger should ride in the back seat. Riding in the back seat is associated with a 40% reduction in the risk of serious injury for children ages 16 and younger. Putting children in the back seat eliminates the injury risk of deployed front passenger-side airbags and places children in the safest part of the vehicle in the event of a crash. Adults should avoid placing children in front of airbags.
- Overall, for children younger than 16 years, riding in the back seat is associated with a 40% reduction in the risk of serious injury.

From: Susan [kipc@hawaiiintel.net]
Sent: Monday, February 22, 2010 1:38 PM
To: JUDtestimony
Subject: HB2693/2.23
Attachments: image001.jpg

TESTIMONY FOR HB2693

Hearing: Tuesday, February 23, 2010, 2 p.m.



The Keiki Injury Prevention Coalition (KIPC), including all of its community agency members and its Board of Directors, strongly supports this legislation. As the community agency entrusted to run the car seat program for the island of Oahu for a number of years, we are aware of the best practices in child passenger safety. This legislation would increase the safety of children traveling in motor vehicles on our roads. Traveling in motor vehicles is the well-documented leading cause of death and disability to the children of Hawaii. HB 2693 would implement what is already law in many other states and it allows for reasonable exceptions. This legislation is based on the expertise of child passenger safety experts. It is incumbent upon us all to do whatever we can to ensure the safety of children while in they are in the vehicles of our state.

February 22, 2010

**The Honorable Jon Riki Karamatsu
Committee on Judiciary
The House of Representatives
State Capitol
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813**

Dear Chair Karamatsu and members:

Subject: HOUSE BILL 2693, RELATING TO CHILD PASSENGER RESTRAINTS

My name is Charles Hirata and I am a resident of Wailuku, Maui. I have been involved in child passenger safety since 1995 and a certified Child Passenger Safety Technician Instructor since 1998. I am writing in support of this bill that would extend responsibility to a parent or legal guardian who may be present in the vehicle when a child is being transported. Currently, a person who is merely trying to assist a parent in transporting a child may be cited, even though the parent or guardian may be within the vehicle. This change is based on surveys conducted by instructors who teach classes for child restraint violators. Violators who are convicted of the Child Restraint law are required to take a four-hour class.

The other change proposed by this bill would ensure that children will be transported in the back seat and only allowed in the front seat under certain conditions. The rear seat is 37% safer than the front seat and only under certain conditions should a child under the age of 13 be allowed to ride in the front seat. This recommendation can be found in vehicle instruction manuals and on airbag warning labels found on the vehicle's visor.

Although these warnings are found in childseat instruction manuals and in vehicle instruction manuals, some continue to place their children in harm's way by transporting them on the front seat. The impact from an inflating airbag has enough force to kill a child and rear-facing infants are especially at risk from this hazard. The effect of this change would serve as a reminder to parents and caregivers to place their children in the safest part of the vehicle and will provide clear guidance to law enforcement and the courts.

I would also like to recommend that the current \$25.00 tax credit towards the purchase of a child restraint be continued.

I humbly ask for your support of this bill that will enhance protection for our most precious resource; our children.

Very truly yours,

CHARLES M. HIRATA