



TESTIMONY BY:

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STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
869 PUNCHBOWL STREET
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-5097

January 31, 2020
10:00 A.M.
State Capitol, Room 423

H.B. 2004
RELATING TO CHILD PASSENGER RESTRAINTS

House Committee on Transportation

The Department of Transportation **supports** H.B. 2004. Keeping children safe on our roadways is one of our highest priorities.

We support the raising of the age for rear facing, and increasing fines, as well as support the raising of child's age for vehicle operators to ensure that the child is properly restrained in a safety or booster seat.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, "infants and toddlers should ride in a rear-facing car safety seat as long as possible, until they reach the highest weight or height allowed by their seat. Most convertible seats have limits that will allow children to ride rear-facing for 2 years or more."

Currently, 11 states have requirements that children under the age of two be rear-facing. It is recommended that the State of Hawaii should also adopt these requirements.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

January 31, 2020

TO: Representative Henry J.C. Aquino, Chair Transportation
Representative Troy N. Hashimoto, Vice-Chair Transportation
Members of the House Transportation Committee

FR: AAA HAWAII

RE: **HB2004 RELATING TO CHILD PASSENGER RESTRAINTS. - SUPPORT**
Amends requirements for child passengers. Requires rear facing child safety seats for children under two years of age. Raises certain fines for violations.

Dear Chair Aquino, Vice-Chair Hashimoto and members of the committee,

AAA Hawaii strongly supports HB2004. Many states have enacted, and others are considering, this very important step to improve safety by requiring children younger than two to be in a rear-facing child safety seat. If enacted, Hawaii will join 11 other states that have adopted this new national standard to protect the most vulnerable and youngest motor vehicle passengers.

The American Academy of Pediatrics agrees that children should ride rear facing as long as possible and at least until two years of age or until they reach the weight limits of their seat. A 2007 University of Virginia study found that children were 75 percent less likely to suffer severe or fatal injuries in a crash if they are facing the rear. Requiring children to stay rear facing until the age of two is the easiest way to keep children safe while on the road.

Rear facing car seats are constructed to allow children to "ride down" the crash, whereas forward facing seats, much like seat belts, hold occupants in their seats. For babies, this is a critical difference. Their heads are often larger and heavier in proportion to their bodies, which can cause significant trauma to the neck and spine in a crash if they are forward facing. Rear facing car seats spread frontal crash forces over the whole area of a child's back, head and neck and they prevent the head from "snapping" relative to the body in a frontal crash.

AAA advocates for measures to improve traffic safety, including vulnerable road users such as child passengers in an automobile. We support growing legislative efforts in many states to enact more effective child safety seat laws. AAA also provides free educational materials and free community programs that help new parents make sure car seats are properly installed.

Since 1915, AAA Hawaii has been a leader in motorist services and a strong advocate for traffic safety. With more than 165,000 members, traffic safety is the cornerstone of our mission in the state. HB2004 moves the state in the right direction in further improving the safety of children in automobiles. We respectfully urge your YES vote on HB2004.

Sincerely,

Liane Sumida

Liane Sumida
General Manager

1130 N. Nimitz Highway, Suite A170, Honolulu, HI 96817

Auto Club Enterprises provides service to more than 14 million members





Date: January 29, 2020

TO: Rep. Henry J.C. Aquino, Chair
Rep. Troy N. Hashimoto, Vice Chair
Members of the Transportation Committee

FR: Keiki Injury Prevention Coalition

RE: HB 2004 RELATING TO CHILD PASSENGER RESTRAINTS – IN SUPPORT

Amends requirements for child passengers. Requires rear facing child safety seats for children under two years of age. Raises certain fines for violations.

Dear Chair Aquino, Vice-Chair Hashimoto, and members of the committee,

The Keiki Injury Prevention Coalition strongly supports HB 2004. Injury is one of the leading causes of death and disability in Hawaii for all children, responsible for more deaths of children ages 1-17 than all other causes combined. Automobile safety has been our major focus as traffic related injuries continue to be a leading cause of death for Hawaii's children and youth.

We support requiring children to ride rear facing as long as possible and at least until age two years. The American Academy of Pediatrics guideline is that "infants and toddlers should ride in a rear-facing car safety seat as long as possible, until they reach the highest weight or height allowed by their seat. Most convertible seats have limits that will allow children to ride rear-facing for 2 years or more." If enacted, Hawai'i will join 14 other states and the District of Columbia in adopting this national standard to protect the most vulnerable motor vehicle passengers.

The rear facing position protects the child's brain and spinal cord, which are the body parts most prone to devastating and permanent injuries in the case of trauma. Infants' and small children's heads are larger and heavier in proportion to their bodies. This can cause significant injury to the neck and spine when crash forces are applied to them. Rear facing car seats spread crash forces over the whole area of a child's back, head and neck, protecting the spinal cord from snapping which will lead to death or permanent severe injury.

We also support increasing fines to reflect the significant risk for injury in violating this law and support other changes to the statute to ensure that every child is properly restrained in a child restraint, booster seat, or seat belt as appropriate for their age and height.

KIPC's mission is to prevent and reduce injuries to children in Hawaii. With the help of our members, community partners and volunteers we have made major strides in improving vehicle occupant protection for children in our state. Safety Seat Inspection Stations and community events statewide offer hands-on education free of charge.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Karen Tessier

Karen Tessier
Child Passenger Safety Program Coordinator

HB-2004

Submitted on: 1/29/2020 9:43:29 AM

Testimony for TRN on 1/31/2020 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Victor K. Ramos	Individual	Support	No

Comments: