

HCS HB 466 -- CHILD SAFETY RESTRAINTS

CO-SPONSORS: Crawford

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Committee on Transportation and Motor Vehicles by a vote of 20 to 0.

This substitute revises the law pertaining to child passenger restraints and seat belts. The substitute:

- (1) Requires children less than four years old, regardless of weight, or who weigh less than 40 pounds, regardless of age, to be secured in a child passenger restraint system;
- (2) Requires children four to five years old or weighing 40 to 60 pounds to be secured in a child passenger restraint system or booster seat;
- (3) Requires children at least six years old or weighing at least 60 pounds to be secured by a vehicle safety belt;
- (4) Requires car rental agencies doing business in Missouri to inform customers of the requirements of the substitute and to provide an appropriate child passenger safety restraint system;
- (5) Exempts public carriers for hire or school buses from restraint requirements, unless a school bus has been equipped with safety belts or is required to be equipped with safety belts by federal motor vehicle safety standards; and
- (6) Requires the Department of Public Safety to develop a public information program to ensure compliance with child passenger safety restraint laws.

The substitute has an effective date of January 1, 2004.

FISCAL NOTE: Not available at time of printing.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that 83% of children between three and eight years old do not wear seat belts or restraints. In 2000, booster seat usage was very low (approximately 13%). Supporters say the leading cause of death of persons from one to 37 years old is auto crashes. This legislation is a life-saving and cost-saving measure.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Dusenberg; State Farm Insurance; State Highway Patrol; Missouri Safety Council; Division of Highway Safety; and Safe Kids of Greater St. Louis.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

Robert Triplett, Legislative Analyst