

HB 1202 -- Child Safety Restraints

Sponsor: Dusenberg

This bill revises the law regarding child passenger restraints and seat belts. The bill:

- (1) Requires children less than four years of age, 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 through five years of age or weighing 40 to 60 pounds to be secured in a child passenger restraint system or booster seat;
- (3) Requires children at six years of age or at least 60 pounds to be secured by a vehicle safety belt, child passenger restraint system, or booster seat;
- (4) Allows children weighing more than 40 pounds, who would otherwise be required to be secured in a booster seat, to be transported in the back seat of a vehicle while wearing only a lap belt if the back seat of the motor vehicle is not equipped with a combination lap and shoulder belt for booster seat installation;
- (5) Requires car rental agencies doing business in Missouri to inform customers of the requirements of the bill and to provide an appropriate child passenger safety restraint system;
- (6) Exempts public carriers for hire or school buses unless the school buses have been equipped with safety belts; and
- (7) Requires the Department of Public Safety to develop a public information program to ensure compliance with child passenger safety restraint laws.

The bill provides that if there are more people in a vehicle than are seat belts, the passengers who are unable to wear seat belts must sit in the rear-seat area of the vehicle unless the vehicle is designed only for a front-seat area.

A violation of this child restraint provision is an infraction and punishable by a fine of not more than \$25 plus court costs with no points assessed against any person. The charges against any person receiving a citation for a child restraint violation will be dismissed or withdrawn if the person provides prior to or at a hearing evidence of acquisition of a child passenger restraint system or child booster seat which is satisfactory to the court or prosecutor.

The bill has an effective date of January 1, 2005.