

March 9, 2016

The Honorable Luther Olsen
Wisconsin State Senate
State Capitol
Madison, WI 53707

Dear Senator Olsen,

Thank you for your leadership to strengthen Wisconsin's law on child passenger safety. The bills, SB332 and A400, would bring Wisconsin traffic safety laws in line with recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).

The legislation is based on hard evidence. The use of car seats reduces the risk of infant mortality by 71 percent and toddlers 1-4 by 54%. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), in 2013, the lives of at least 263 kids were saved because they were seated in child restraints. More specifically, according to a study led by national experts, when comparing the risk of injury for children 12-23 months old in front and rear facing car seats olds during a motor vehicle crash, the risk of a moderate or severe injury is five times higher for the child in the front facing seat.

Data is important but there's a face to smart child safety public policy. In June of 2014, Bethany Olson and her two children survived a severe crash in Baldwin, Wisconsin colliding with a cattle trailer. Two-year-old Gunner was released from the hospital the same day while 14-month-old Emmajean was treated for a traumatic brain injury and has now fully recovered. Two weeks before the crash, Olson had attended a car seat check-up event at the Baldwin Area Medical Center to make sure the seats were placed in the car properly. When the crash occurred, the kids were properly seated in a rear facing position. Mrs. Olson told KARE television that she credits the car seat placement for saving the lives of her kids: "No child should die from their car seat being installed incorrectly, their car seat facing the wrong way, or not being restrained correctly with a harness."

Mrs. Olson is right.

Safe Kids Worldwide is a global network of organizations dedicated to protecting kids from unintentional injuries, the number one cause of death to children in the United States. We work with a network of more than 400 coalitions in the U.S. and in 28 countries on child safety issues including injuries on highways and involving motor vehicles. It is a grassroots organization, working with Safe Kids Wisconsin and its 12 coalitions.

Wisconsin is a national leader in passing laws that make kids, our most vulnerable citizens, safer and this bill would continue this track record. Safe Kids Worldwide and Safe Kids Wisconsin stand ready to help you in this effort in any way that we can.

Sincerely,



Libbe Slavin
Coalition Coordinator
Safe Kids Wisconsin



Anthony Green
Director of Public Policy
Safe Kids Worldwide