



Alaska State Legislature Senate Majority News

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Primary Seat Belt Law Passes Legislature *Buckling Up Saves Lives on Alaska's Roadways*

(Juneau) – Legislation promising to save lives, prevent injuries and save millions of dollars each year passed the Alaska Legislature today. The primary seat belt law (SB 87) requires law enforcement officers to pull over and issue a citation for anyone not wearing a seat belt while traveling on state highways.

Sen. Con Bunde (R – Anchorage) sponsored the bill. “Wearing seat belts is unquestionably the best way to avoid getting hurt or killed in an automobile accident. The primary seat belt law increases their use by around 15 percent and that prevents hundreds of injuries and will save an average of six lives each year on Alaska’s roadways,” said Sen. Bunde.

A primary seat belt law also saves millions of private and public sector dollars every year in medical, rehabilitative and insurance costs.

State law already requires anyone riding in an automobile to wear seat belts, however, police and state troopers could not cite drivers unless they were pulled over for a different reason.

The primary seat belt law does *not* apply to motorcycles or snowmobiles and other vehicles not intended for use on highways.

SB 87 was co-sponsored by Sen. Gary Wilken (R – Fairbanks), Sen. Ralph Seekins (R – Fairbanks), Sen. John Cowdery (R – Anchorage), Sen. Tom Wagoner (R – Kenai) and Rep. Lesil McGuire (R- Anchorage).

Joining together in support of the bill was Anchorage Police Chief Walt Monegan, Fairbanks Police Chief Dan Hoffman, Alaska Department of Public Safety Commissioner William Tandeske and the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Twenty-one other states and the District of Columbia also have a primary seat belt law on the books.

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