



May 26, 2015

Governor Mary Fallin
Oklahoma State Capitol
2300 N. Lincoln Blvd., Room 212
Oklahoma City, OK 73105

Dear Governor Fallin,

We write to urge you to sign House Bill 1847 which updates Oklahoma's current child passenger safety law to reflect the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Car crashes are the leading cause of death for Oklahoma children. According to a Safe Kids report released last year, in 2012 Oklahoma had the eight highest motor vehicle crash fatality rate among children ages 4 to 8 years old in the country, at 15 fatalities per 100,000. In 2013, 6,676 child passengers, infants to age 12 were occupants of passenger vehicles or pickup trucks in traffic crashes. Of these 6,676 child passengers 22 were killed and 607 seriously injured. Of the 607 seriously injured, 227 were infant to age 5, which are currently covered by Oklahoma's child passenger safety law, and 380 were children age 6-12, who are not currently covered by Oklahoma law.

The use of seat belts alone for children under the age of 8 and 4'9" is an ineffective way to protect a child in a car, and could cause injury because of where the belt is positioned on a body that young. The use of booster seats reduces the risk of serious injury by 45 percent in comparison to seat belts for children 4 to 8 years of age and below the height of 4' 9". This bill responds to evidence by requiring children to remain in car seats during these years and prohibiting children from sitting in the front seat up to age 13. The safest place for children is always in the back seat.

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 25 countries on child safety issues including injuries on highways and involving motor vehicles. Safe Kids Oklahoma are heroes in efforts to make our kids safer.

Passage of this bill would be an important advancement for the safety of Oklahoma's children. Please sign this bill into law.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cassandra Herring".

Cassandra Herring
Oklahoma City Metro Coordinator
Safe Kids Oklahoma

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anthony Green".

Anthony Green
Director of Public Policy
Safe Kids Worldwide



safekids.org