



**Testimony of Anthony Green
Public Policy Director of Safe Kids Worldwide
Senate of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Child Passenger Safety
July 13, 2015**

The Honorable State Senator Thomas McGee
Chairman, Joint Committee on Transportation
State House Room 109C
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable State Representative William Straus
Chairman, Joint Committee on Transportation
State House Room 134
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Chairman McGee and Chairman Straus,

Thank you for considering SB 1848, an act relative to child passenger safety, at this hearing today. I provide this statement on behalf of Safe Kids Worldwide and our three coalitions in the state of Massachusetts. We respectfully submit this testimony to comment on the importance of this bill to the safety of Massachusetts' children.

Safe Kids Worldwide is a nonprofit organization with the mission to prevent unintentional injuries involving kids 19 and under, through education, grassroots programs, and advocacy. Unintentional injury is the number one cause of death of Americans in that age group. Safe Kids Worldwide and our more than 400 coalitions nationwide work to reduce injuries related to drowning, falls, poisoning, and more. Our Safe Kids Massachusetts coalition is based out of the Boston Children's Hospital, with coalitions in Western Massachusetts and Boston, respectively through the Baystate Children's Hospital and the Boston Public Health Commission. Our 27 year history began with protecting kids in and around cars, whether they are in booster seats or walking more safely to school, and that remains a central aspect of our work to this day. There has been a 60% decrease in the unintentional injury rate among children since Safe Kids was founded, and driving that reduction has been a 58% reduction in motor vehicle deaths. However, motor vehicle crashes remain the leading cause of death for children five years old to age 14.

Current Massachusetts state law provides a strong foundation for child vehicle safety, requiring that children under the age of eight be fastened and secured in a child passenger restraint and children under the age of 13 wear a safety belt. However, this requirement does not account for where in the vehicle children are seated and secured. As a result, many children including those in booster seats may be placed by parents in the front seat of a motor vehicle. This bill is based on the best industry research and best practices in ensuring that children under the age of 13 are seated in the safest place possible, the rear passenger seats, whenever possible.



We know from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) that children who are in the front seat are at a 40% to 70% higher risk of injury than those in rear seats. We stand with Safe Kids Massachusetts, the AAP, and AAA in support of the rear seat standard for children. This bill takes a significant step forward on safety for all children by including this standard in Massachusetts' existing child passenger safety law.

In closing, we wish to pass on our sincere condolences at the passing of this bill's original sponsor, Senator Thomas P. Kennedy, to his colleagues here in the Senate and especially his friends and family. We are thankful for Senator Kennedy's honorable public service and his leadership on this important issue of child safety. Senator Kennedy's leadership and this bill provide the opportunity to demonstrate Massachusetts' continued leadership in child safety and a strengthened commitment to ending preventable vehicle-related injuries.

Safe Kids appreciates this opportunity to be heard on issues vital to keeping our kids safe on the road and in motor vehicles. We ask this body to vote favorably on this bill and as soon as possible so that it might quickly find its way to Governor Baker's desk.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anthony J. Green". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Director of Public Policy
Safe Kids Worldwide

agreeen@safekids.org
Office: 202.662.0606
Mobile: 202.615.4300
1301 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Suite 1000
Washington, D.C. 20004-1707