

HOUSE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE  
January 28, 2021, 9 AM

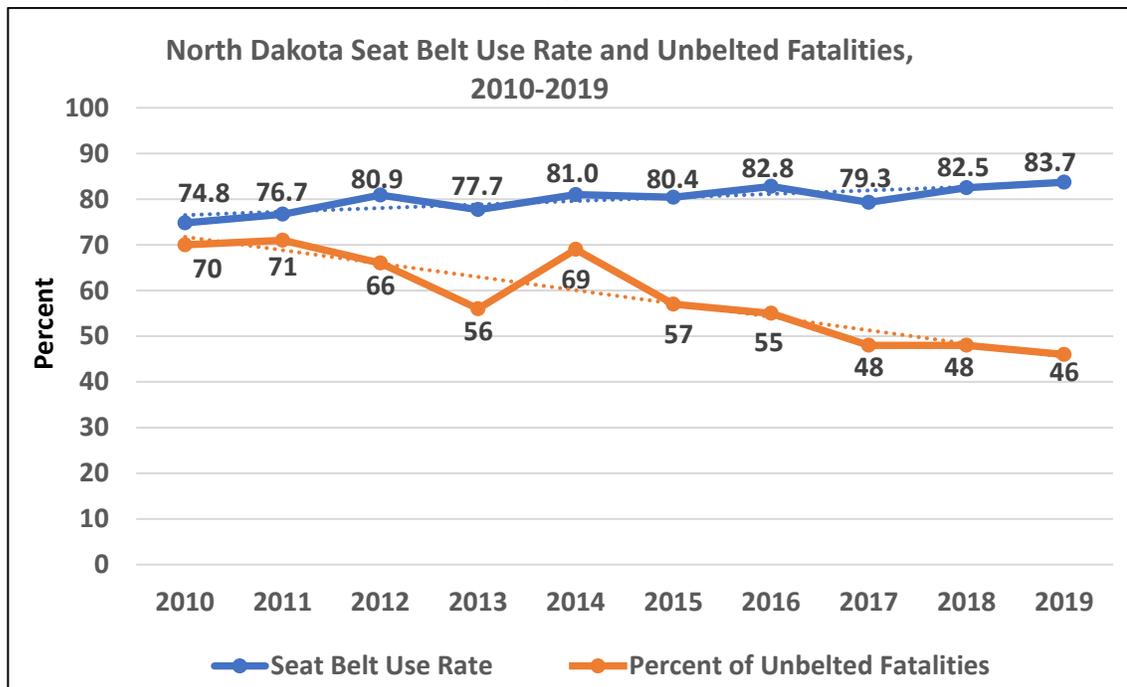
North Dakota Department of Transportation  
Karin Mongeon, Safety Division Director  
HB 1257

Good morning Chairman Ruby and members of the House Transportation Committee. My name is Karin Mongeon and I am the Safety Division Director for the North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT). I am here this morning on behalf of the NDDOT in opposition of HB 1257.

HB 1257 would remove the requirement for anyone over the age of 18 to wear a seat belt.

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of injury-related death in North Dakota. And, seat belt use has definitively reduced the percent of unbelted motor vehicle fatalities in North Dakota over the past 10 years as shown in Figure 1. As seat belt use has increased, the percent of unbelted crash fatalities has significantly decreased.

FIGURE 1



Further evidence of the effectiveness of seat belts is included as Attachment 1 which proves that states with higher seat belt use rates have lower unbelted motor vehicle crash fatalities. It also shows that New Jersey, the only state in the U.S. with no seat belt use requirement, has the highest percent of unbelted crash fatalities nationwide.

As you're aware, Vision Zero is North Dakota's initiative to reduce motor vehicle crash fatalities and serious injuries to zero. Vision Zero has the support and involvement of hundreds of stakeholders throughout North Dakota who work together to apply evidence-based strategies proven to prevent crash fatalities and serious injuries. Vision Zero stakeholders support strategies to advance seat belt use such as a Primary Seat Belt Law (PBL) which is among the evidence-based strategies identified in the North Dakota *Vision Zero* Plan as a priority strategy

for implementation. Vision Zero stakeholders support SB 2121 which proposes implementation of a PBL and would have immediate and significant impact. Research shows that states that transitioned to a PBL have experienced a 10-12 percent increase in their observed seat belt use (Source: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration).

Seat belts save lives. They are the single most effective traffic safety device to prevent death and injury in a motor vehicle crash. There is no doubt that removing the requirement for adults to wear a seat belt would result in an increase in motor vehicle crash deaths across North Dakota.

That concludes my testimony and I'll respond to any questions you may have.

**ATTACHMENT 1**

<b>Seat Belt Use Rates and Unbelted Fatalities</b>								
<b>United States, 2018</b>								
<b>State</b>	<b>Seat Belt Use Rates</b>					<b>Law Type</b>	<b>Fine Amount</b>	<b>2018 Percent Unrestrained Fatalities</b>
	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>			
District of Columbia	93.2%	95.5%	94.1%	93.6%	95.1%	Primary	\$50	12.5%
Oregon	97.8%	95.5%	96.2%	96.8%	95.8%	Primary	\$130	26.3%
Michigan	93.3%	92.8%	94.5%	94.1%	93.4%	Primary	\$25	28.4%
California	97.1%	97.3%	96.5%	96.2%	95.9%	Primary	\$162	30.9%
Utah	83.4%	87.2%	87.9%	88.8%	89.0%	Primary	\$45	31.8%
New York	90.6%	92.2%	91.8%	93.4%	92.9%	Primary	\$50	32.6%
Washington	94.5%	94.6%	94.7%	94.8%	93.2%	Primary	\$124	32.6%
Minnesota	94.7%	94.0%	93.2%	92.0%	92.4%	Primary	\$100	33.1%
Iowa	92.8%	93.0%	93.8%	91.4%	93.9%	Primary	\$128	34.8%
Maryland	92.1%	92.9%	90.8%	92.1%	90.3%	Primary	\$83	35.6%
West Virginia	87.8%	89.0%	86.8%	89.7%	90.5%	Primary	\$25	36.2%
Illinois	94.1%	95.2%	93.0%	93.8%	94.6%	Primary	\$25	36.9%
Wisconsin	84.7%	85.8%	88.4%	89.4%	89.3%	Primary	\$10	37.5%
Indiana	90.2%	91.9%	92.4%	93.0%	93.4%	Primary	\$25	37.9%
Connecticut	85.1%	85.4%	89.4%	90.3%	92.1%	Primary	\$92	39.0%
Texas	90.7%	90.5%	91.6%	91.9%	91.3%	Primary	\$50	39.6%
North Carolina	90.6%	89.9%	91.7%	91.4%	91.3%	Primary	\$161	41.1%
Hawaii	93.5%	92.8%	94.5%	96.9%	97.8%	Primary	\$112	41.7%
New Jersey	87.6%	91.4%	93.4%	94.1%	94.5%	Primary	\$46	42.3%
Tennessee	87.7%	86.2%	88.9%	88.5%	90.9%	Primary	\$25	42.5%
Rhode Island	87.4%	86.7%	87.5%	88.3%	88.8%	Primary	\$40	43.3%
Florida	88.8%	89.4%	89.6%	90.2%	90.6%	Primary	\$30	44.2%
Georgia	97.3%	97.3%	97.2%	97.1%	96.3%	Primary	\$15	44.4%
Nevada	94.0%	92.1%	89.4%	90.6%	91.9%	Second	\$25	44.5%
Kansas	85.7%	82.1%	87.0%	82.0%	84.0%	Primary	\$10	45.1%
Ohio	85.0%	83.9%	83.8%	82.8%	84.9%	Second	\$30	45.6%
Oklahoma	86.3%	84.5%	86.6%	86.9%	85.6%	Primary	\$20	46.4%
Alaska	88.4%	89.3%	88.5%	90.1%	91.6%	Primary	\$15	46.8%
Arizona	87.2%	86.6%	88.0%	86.1%	85.9%	Second	\$10	46.9%
Louisiana	84.1%	85.9%	87.8%	87.1%	86.9%	Primary	\$25	47.3%
South Carolina	90.0%	91.6%	93.9%	92.3%	89.7%	Primary	\$25	48.6%
Massachusetts	76.6%	74.1%	78.2%	73.7%	81.6%	Second	\$25	49.0%
North Dakota	81.0%	80.4%	82.8%	79.3%	82.5%	Second	\$20	49.3%
Maine	85.0%	85.5%	85.8%	88.9%	88.5%	Primary	\$50	49.5%
Alabama	95.7%	93.3%	92.0%	92.9%	91.8%	Primary	\$25	49.7%
Arkansas	74.4%	77.7%	75.1%	81.0%	78.0%	Primary	\$25	50.6%
New Mexico	92.1%	93.3%	92.3%	91.5%	90.2%	Primary	\$25	50.7%
Pennsylvania	83.6%	82.7%	85.2%	85.6%	88.5%	Second	\$10	51.1%
Wyoming	79.2%	79.8%	80.5%	84.8%	86.3%	Second	\$25	51.8%
Delaware	91.9%	90.4%	91.4%	91.4%	92.4%	Primary	\$25	52.4%
Virginia	77.3%	80.9%	79.0%	85.3%	84.1%	Second	\$25	53.1%
Idaho	80.2%	81.1%	82.9%	81.2%	85.4%	Second	\$10	53.2%
Nebraska	79.0%	79.6%	83.3%	85.9%	85.5%	Second	\$25	53.3%
Colorado	82.4%	85.2%	84.0%	83.8%	86.3%	Second	\$71	53.6%
Kentucky	86.1%	86.7%	86.5%	86.8%	89.9%	Primary	\$25	54.4%
Vermont	84.1%	86.0%	80.0%	84.5%	89.8%	Second	\$25	56.9%
Mississippi	78.3%	79.6%	77.9%	78.8%	80.2%	Primary	\$25	56.9%
Missouri	78.8%	79.9%	81.4%	84.0%	87.1%	Second	\$50	58.0%
South Dakota	68.9%	73.6%	74.2%	74.8%	78.9%	Second	\$25	63.2%
Montana	74.0%	77.0%	76.0%	78.0%	86.6%	Second	\$20	64.4%
New Hampshire	70.4%	69.5%	70.2%	67.6%	76.4%	None	\$0	69.6%
<b>Nationwide</b>	<b>86.7%</b>	<b>88.5%</b>	<b>90.1%</b>	<b>89.7%</b>	<b>89.6%</b>			<b>43.1%</b>