



March 7, 2023

To: Transportation Committee Members

From: Sergeant Tim Bleth

Subject: SB2362

Mr. Chairman and members of the Transportation Committee for the record, my name is Tim Bleth. I am a Sergeant with the Bismarck Police Department and assigned to the Traffic Section. I have been in law enforcement for over 24 years with the last 14 years in the traffic section. I am also a crash reconstructionist who provides expert opinions on crash analysis. I have been instructing Defensive Driving for over 10 years as well. I am testifying in support of SB2362 which would repeal 39-21-41.5 and require all occupants within a vehicle to wear a safety belt. The Bismarck Police Department strongly supports this bill.

You are 14 times more likely to be injured or killed in a roll over crash if not wearing a safety belt. With North Dakota being a rural state with several two-lane highways and gravel roads with no shoulders, the chances of being involved in a rollover crash increases greatly, and yes, we do have several rollover crashes in Bismarck as well.

When occupants fail to wear their safety belts, their weight times speed will create a force which potentially could impact other occupants in the vehicle. For example, a 200lb adult moving at 30mph will create 6000ft/lbs of kinetic energy. Imagine a small child secured in a safety seat and an adult is thrown at that child with 6000ft/lbs of force. The child more than likely would suffer severe injury or death.

Law Enforcement are partners of the Vision Zero campaign, and we all want to strive for zero fatalities in motor vehicle crashes. I have heard from many of the violators I have stopped state, "If it was a primary law, I would always wear my seat belt".

Thank you for your time and consideration. I will be present at the hearing if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

Sergeant Tim Bleth

Dave Draovitch, Chief of Police

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