



AAA-The Auto Club Group
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March 8, 2023

Representative Dan Ruby
State Capitol
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Chairman Ruby and Members of the House Transportation Committee,

On behalf of AAA – The Auto Club Group and our more than 70,000 members in North Dakota I'm writing to express support for SB 2362, which would allow primary enforcement of the state's seat belt law.

As someone who's spoken to many groups on traffic safety-related topics, I frequently ask people if they'd buckle their seat belt if they knew they'd be involved in a crash. I've never heard "no." It's widely accepted that seat belts give vehicle occupants the best chance at survival in a crash. They also serve to lessen the severity of injuries. Tragically, at least 46 North Dakotans didn't get a second chance to buckle their belt last year.

No one plans to be in a car crash, but that doesn't stop them from happening. People make mistakes. Not buckling a seat belt isn't a mistake. It's a choice that too often leads to tragedy. A tragedy that affects many people – family, friends, communities and taxpayers. Passage of SB 2362 would help increase seat belt usage and, thereby, reduce the tragic loss of life on our roads.

Yes, vehicles are safer than ever, but that safety is largely dependent on the driver and passengers being properly buckled in. Without the seat belt, all the safety engineering that goes into crumple zones, airbags, passenger compartments, glass and much more is deemed much less effective. The roughly 18 percent of North Dakotans who ignore this fact die at higher rates on North Dakota roads. The overwhelming majority are men.

Through education, enforcement and sound, evidence-based policy, we can increase seat belt use in North Dakota and reduce the unnecessary loss of life and the personal and economic toll traffic crashes have on everyone. Stemming the tide of crash fatalities and serious injuries starts with embracing a culture of safety and the Safe Systems Approach to traffic safety. The House Transportation Committee can lead the way by embracing SB 2362.

Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the opportunity to express support for this important measure and urge a "Do Pass" recommendation by the committee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gene LaDoucer".

Gene LaDoucer
Public Affairs Director

AAA-The Auto Club Group (ACG) is a membership based, non-profit corporation operating in fourteen states and two US Territories. It is one of the largest American Automobile Association (AAA) clubs in the United States with approximately 14 million members. ACG provides travel, insurance, automotive, and financial services to its members. In North Dakota, AAA – The Auto Club Group serves more than 70,000 members and works to represent the interests of members and the traveling public in the state legislature.