

Senate Bill 2362 - Primary Seatbelt

House of Representatives

March 7, 2023

Written by: Gus Jensen, Flasher High School

House Transportation Committee,

My name is Gus Jensen and I am a Junior at Flasher High School. I am a Vision Zero Student leader and also a Racecar driver. I abide by both the rules on public roads and the rules on the tracks that I go to.

As a student in High School that has gone through the process of getting my permit and my driver's license, I've learned a lot about the laws that we have here in the state of North Dakota.

I understand that there is a different set of laws when it comes to seatbelts, depending on your age. As a 17 year old I am required to buckle up whether I am riding in the front seat or back seat, and can be pulled over for not wearing a seatbelt. But, as soon as I am 18 - the law changes. My question is why?

In my age group there were over 10-thousand teenagers involved in crashes from 2017-2021. Only 3 percent were not wearing seatbelts. I know teens wear seatbelts because it keeps them safe, and because there is a law. Why are adults different?

I believe that it would be best to combine these laws and have everyone in the car to be buckled up. It will be safer for every driver, passenger, and even pedestrians. There has been research that shows that if both drivers 17 and under, and 18 and older wear their seatbelts and everyone in the vehicle is buckled as well, it would save lives. The truth is, some people need a law to make that happen.

This is not meant for law enforcement to be able to pull more people over, but for the safety of you and others on the road. I always remind myself and others to buckle up because I know how important seatbelts are.

During the summer I am especially mindful of wearing my seatbelt. This is because race season is in full swing and wearing all of my safety gear is very important. In my race car wearing safety gear such as my helmet, 5-point harness, arm-restraints, and fire resistant suit are mandatory and I could get into a lot of trouble if I was caught not wearing it.

I have been in 2 roll-over crashes in my racecar and my 5-point harness and arm-restraints saved me from being seriously injured. The only damage that I sustained was a few bruises and the wind knocked out of me.

I know that my fellow competitors and my friends and family were very appreciative of the seatbelt I was wearing. There are many crashes in racing and nobody really gets hurt in crashes because they know that wearing seatbelts are key to being safe when out on the track. Seatbelts should be the key to being safe when on the road as well. Please make everyone in the vehicle buckle up.

Please support Senate Bill 2362. I am now open to any questions that you may have

-Gus Jensen

Flasher High School