



# BURLEIGH COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

**KELLY LEBEN**  
SHERIFF

68th Legislative Assembly Testimony in Support of  
**Senate Bill No. 2362**  
**Senate Transportation Committee**  
February 3, 2023

Chairman Clemens and members of the Senate Transportation Committee, my name is Theresa Liebsch and I have been a Vision Zero Coordinator through Burleigh and Morton County Sheriff's Offices since December of 2020. I am writing in support of Senate Bill 2362.

Since taking on this position, I have learned about the physical, emotional, and financial cost of unbelted motor vehicle fatalities in our state. I fully understand how valuable a primary seat belt law can be. We can all agree how devastating it is when someone dies in a car crash. However, what I didn't know was how much it cost our state. Did you know it costs our taxpayers over \$1.7 million every time someone dies in a car crash? Last year, in motor vehicle crashes with seat belts applicable, 67.6% of our fatalities chose not to buckle up on our North Dakota roads (preliminary data). That means last year, unbelted occupants cost our state approximately \$78.2 million. That amount alone would be worth passing this bill.

Minnesota passed a primary seat belt law in 2009. In 2008, 152 unbelted motorists lost their lives on Minnesota roads. In 2019, that number has decreased to 72. That's a 52.6% drop. That's also \$136 million saved.

I would much rather have someone fined \$20 for not wearing their seat belt than have our North Dakota taxpayer's hard-earned dollars pay the \$1.7 million out of their own pocket. Freedom always comes with a cost. In my opinion, one unbelted life is too much. DO PASS SB 2362.

Theresa Liebsch – Vision Zero Coordinator SW Region  
Burleigh County Sheriff's Department

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