

Madison's Booster Seat Bill

House Bill # 217

Sponsored by Representative Mark Burkhalter

The bill would require children under the age of 7 to be protected in a booster seat while riding in a motor vehicle.



Photo of the Harty's van after the crash

The entire family survived. Our daughters, ages 5 and 6 were restrained in booster seats at the time of the crash. Our 6-year-old walked away without a scratch. Madison, our 5-year-old, was seated on the crash side. She suffered a broken hand and deep cuts on her arm, which required surgery where doctors put in more than 500 stitches. Experts who arrived on the scene felt that the girls would have been severely injured or even killed if they had been riding only in adult seats belts, which is all that Georgia law currently requires.

When it comes to seat belts one size DOES NOT fit all. Seat belts are designed to protect an average size adult not a small child. Booster seats protect children by properly positioning the lap belt low across the thighs and the shoulder belts over the collarbone and away from the neck preventing injury, ejection or possibly death in the event of a crash.

*83% of children in this country between the ages of 4 and 8 are inappropriately restrained in adult safety belts. This inappropriate restraint results in a 3.5-fold increased risk of significant injury and a more than 4-fold increased risk of significant head injury (Partners for Child Passenger Safety 2001).

*80% of Americans support extending booster seat laws to children up to 8 years old (Harris Poll 2001).

*76% of Georgia's 4-to-8-year-old children are not riding in booster seats and are at greater risk of injury or death on the roads. (Boost America 2002).

*Motor Vehicle crash injuries continue to be the leading cause of death for children ages 4 - 12 years old in Georgia (Governors Office of Highway Safety, 2002)

*Currently ²⁰ other states and the District of Columbia have passed booster seat laws, including South Carolina and Virginia.

For Georgia's Children

For further information or to help in efforts to get Madison's Booster Seat Bill passed, please contact Jenny Harty at 770-409-1924 or email at boh40@hotmail.com

For more information on child passenger safety and booster seat laws, please visit: www.saferoads.org