

HOUSE BILL NO. 586

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A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT REVISING CHILD SAFETY RESTRAINT SYSTEM LAWS; REQUIRING THE USE OF A CHILD SAFETY RESTRAINT SYSTEM FOR CHILDREN UNDER CERTAIN AGE THRESHOLDS 6 YEARS OF AGE CERTAIN AGE THRESHOLDS; PROVIDING EXEMPTIONS FOR CERTAIN VEHICLES AND CIRCUMSTANCES FROM CHILD SAFETY RESTRAINT SYSTEM LAWS; PROVIDING DEFINITIONS; AND AMENDING SECTIONS 61-9-419, 61-9-420, AND 61-9-421, MCA."

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

Section 1. Section 61-9-419, MCA, is amended to read:

"61-9-419. ~~"Properly restrained"~~ defined Definitions. (1) As used in 61-9-420 through 61-9-423 and this section, unless the context requires otherwise, the following definitions apply:

(a) "Booster seat" means a child safety restraint system that meets applicable federal motor vehicle safety standards and is designed to provide belt-positioning that elevates a child to be properly seated with a safety belt.

(b) "Child safety restraint system" means a device that:

(i) meets applicable federal motor vehicle safety standards; and

(ii) is appropriate to the age of the child being restrained, as provided in 61-9-420.

(c) (i) ~~"properly restrained"~~ "Properly restrained" means fastened in a manner prescribed by the manufacturer of the child safety restraint system that permits the child safety restraint system to act as a body restraint, ~~but.~~

(ii) The term does not mean a system in which the only body restraint is a safety belt of the type

1 required by 61-9-409.

2 (d) "Secured with a safety belt" means restrained or secured by a seat belt that:

3 (i) meets applicable federal motor vehicle safety standards; and

4 (ii) is properly adjusted and fastened ~~WITH THE LAP STRAP ACROSS THE HIPS AND THE SHOULDER~~
5 ~~STRAP ACROSS THE CHEST, including both the shoulder and lap straps., INCLUDING BOTH THE SHOULDER AND LAP~~
6 ~~STRAPS, when equipped in the vehicle."~~

7

8 **Section 2.** Section 61-9-420, MCA, is amended to read:

9 **"61-9-420. Child safety restraint systems -- standards -- exemptions.** (1) ~~EACH MOTOR VEHICLE~~
10 ~~PASSENGER WHO IS UNDER 6 YEARS OF AGE AND WEIGHS LESS THAN 60 POUNDS MUST BE TRANSPORTED AND~~
11 ~~PROPERLY RESTRAINED IN A CHILD SAFETY RESTRAINT SYSTEM .. THE CHILD SAFETY RESTRAINT SYSTEM MUST BE~~
12 ~~APPROPRIATE FOR THE HEIGHT AND WEIGHT OF THE CHILD, AS INDICATED BY MANUFACTURER STANDARDS, AND COMPLY~~
13 ~~WITH FEDERAL MOTOR VEHICLE SAFETY STANDARDS.~~ Each motor vehicle passenger who is under 6 years of age
14 and weighs less than 60 pounds must be transported and properly restrained in a child safety restraint. The
15 child safety restraint must be appropriate for the height and weight of the child as indicated by manufacturer
16 standards. ~~A MOTOR VEHICLE PASSENGER WHO IS UNDER 2 YEARS OF AGE MUST BE PROPERLY RESTRAINED IN A REAR-~~
17 ~~FACING CHILD SAFETY RESTRAINT SYSTEM THAT COMPLIES WITH FEDERAL MOTOR VEHICLE SAFETY STANDARDS. A~~
18 ~~motor vehicle passenger who is under 2 years of age must be properly restrained in a rear-facing child safety~~
19 ~~restraint system that complies with federal motor vehicle safety standards.~~

20 (2) ~~A motor vehicle passenger who is between 2 years of age and up to 4 years of age must be~~
21 ~~properly restrained in a rear-facing or forward-facing child safety restraint system with an internal harness that~~
22 ~~complies with federal motor vehicle safety standards.~~

23 (3) ~~A motor vehicle passenger who is between 4 years of age and up to 8 years of age must be~~
24 ~~properly restrained in a forward-facing child safety restraint system with an internal harness or a child booster~~
25 ~~seat that is secured with a vehicle lap-shoulder seat belt, whichever is applicable, that complies with federal~~
26 ~~motor vehicle safety standards.~~

27 (4) ~~A motor vehicle passenger who is at least 9 years of age or has outgrown the height or weight~~
28 ~~limits of a child booster seat as set by the manufacturer, whichever comes first, must be secured with a motor~~

1 ~~vehicle adult safety belt.~~

2 (2) A MOTOR VEHICLE PASSENGER WHO IS BETWEEN 2 YEARS OF AGE AND UP TO 4 YEARS OF AGE MUST
3 BE PROPERLY RESTRAINED IN A REAR-FACING OR FORWARD-FACING CHILD SAFETY RESTRAINT SYSTEM WITH AN
4 INTERNAL HARNESS THAT COMPLIES WITH FEDERAL MOTOR VEHICLE SAFETY STANDARDS.

5 (3) A MOTOR VEHICLE PASSENGER WHO IS BETWEEN 4 YEARS OF AGE AND UP TO 8 YEARS OF AGE MUST
6 BE PROPERLY RESTRAINED IN A FORWARD-FACING CHILD SAFETY RESTRAINT SYSTEM WITH AN INTERNAL HARNESS OR A
7 CHILD BOOSTER SEAT THAT IS SECURED WITH A VEHICLE LAP-SHOULDER SEAT BELT, WHICHEVER IS APPLICABLE, THAT
8 COMPLIES WITH FEDERAL MOTOR VEHICLE SAFETY STANDARDS.

9 (4) A MOTOR VEHICLE PASSENGER WHO IS AT LEAST 9 YEARS OF AGE OR HAS OUTGROWN THE HEIGHT OR
10 WEIGHT LIMITS OF A CHILD BOOSTER SEAT AS SET BY THE MANUFACTURER, WHICHEVER COMES FIRST, MUST BE
11 SECURED WITH A MOTOR VEHICLE ADULT SAFETY BELT.

12 ~~(5)(2)~~ (5) A child safety restraint system pursuant to 61-9-419 through 61-9-423 must be
13 installed, adjusted, and used according to the manufacturer instructions.

14 ~~(2) The department shall by rule establish standards in compliance with 61-9-419 through 61-9-~~
15 ~~423 and applicable federal standards for approved types of child safety restraint systems.~~

16 ~~(3)(6)(3)~~ (6) The department may by rule exempt from the requirements of subsection (1) this
17 section a child who because of a physical or medical condition or body size cannot be placed in a child safety
18 restraint system."

19

20 **Section 3.** Section 61-9-421, MCA, is amended to read:

21 **"61-9-421. Certain vehicles exempt.** Section 61-9-420 is not applicable to a vehicle that as follows:

22 (1) if a vehicle is a motorbus MOTOR HOME, schoolbus SCHOOL BUS, taxicab, FARM TRACTOR, farm
23 tractor, bicycle, moped, quadricycle, or motorcycle, or motor-driven cycle or is not required to be equipped with
24 safety belts under 49 CFR 571 as it reads on ~~January 1, 1984~~ January 3, 2025;

25 (2) if a vehicle is an ambulance or other emergency vehicle designated or authorized by the
26 department; or

27 (2) ~~has a seating capacity as designated by the manufacturer of two persons and there are two~~
28 ~~persons 4 years of age or older in the vehicle.~~

1 (3) if an emergency exists that threatens the life of a person operating a motor vehicle to whom

2 this section would otherwise apply or the life of a child who would otherwise be required to be properly

3 restrained as provided in 61-9-420."

4 - END -