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**Statement of Anthony Green
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Senate, State of Florida
Committee on Transportation
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A recent report of the Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety ranked the State of Florida “red,” as one of just eleven states to be “dangerously behind” in embracing key highway safety features. The most glaring weakness with the state’s laws is that it is one of only two states without an effective booster seat law, meaning that a 4-year-old can ride in a car protected only with an adult seat belt. We join with our coalitions in the state in thanking Senator Anitere Flores for introducing SB 518 which would right this wrong.

Safe Kids Worldwide is a global network of organizations dedicated to protecting kids from unintentional injuries, the number one cause of death to children in the United States. We work with a network of more than 600 coalitions in the U.S. and in 27 countries on child safety issues that include injuries on highways and involving motor vehicles.

We have known for more than four decades that car seats have a compelling impact on saving the lives of children. Each year nearly 1,600 child occupants ages 14 and under die in motor vehicle crashes and close to 228,000 are injured as occupants in motor vehicles. Improperly restrained children are more likely to be injured, to suffer more severe injuries and to die in motor vehicle crashes than children who are restrained properly. In 2012, 17 children between the ages of 4 and 12 died in motor vehicle crashes in Florida; seven of them were not restrained in any way.

This child safety legislation is critical not only for the protection of child passengers in vehicles, but for the future of Florida. While it’s hard to place a dollar figure on the loss of a child, the cost to Florida taxpayers is significant. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that crash-related deaths cost Florida \$3.16 billion. The Advocates’ report estimated that Florida’s “red” rating for failing to provide safety to children in booster seat laws and eight other deficiencies costs the state \$14.4 billion in economic value.

Passage of SB 518 can help Florida see a green light towards making the state safer for kids.



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