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**House Transportation Committee
Testimony in Support of HB2157
February 10, 2015**

Chairman Proehl and Committee Members,

There is no question the strengthening of the seatbelt laws several years ago has been a part of the successful reduction of fatalities and serious injuries in Kansas. But there is still work to be done. This bill is the next step in further reducing this unnecessary loss of life and devastating injuries which too often lead to long term or permanent disabilities. This bill is about the safety of our children.

The proposed higher fine is consistent with many other states and this bill retains the no court cost provision. The unique part of the proposal in SB82 is the creation of a fund to support further passenger restraint safety education programs, particularly aimed at teen drivers. The goal is to increase compliance and reduce the number of people in violation resulting in saved lives. The source of the dollars for this fund is a portion of the fine money from the violators, including municipal court seatbelt violations. This is a well balanced approach focusing on a proven program, SAFE (Seatbelts Are For Everyone). SAFE is a Kansas born program aimed at teen drivers, generally of high school age. The program has proven effective in increasing seatbelt usage and reducing teen fatalities in areas where it has been adopted. The passage of this bill will expand the SAFE Program into as many high schools in Kansas as possible.

Our associations support this approach and we strongly encourage you to recommend HB2157 favorably for passage.

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