

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## ESB 6613

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As Passed Senate, February 14, 2000

**Title:** An act relating to child passenger restraint systems.

**Brief Description:** Changing child passenger restraint provisions.

**Sponsors:** Senators Costa, Long, Haugen, Oke, Winsley, Thibaudeau and Kohl-Welles.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Transportation: 2/1/2000, 2/8/2000 [DPS, DNP].  
Passed Senate, 2/14/2000, 37-11.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6613 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Haugen, Chair; Gardner, Vice Chair; Goings, Vice Chair; Costa, Eide, Heavey, Jacobsen, Oke, Prentice, Shin and Swecker.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Benton, Finkbeiner, Horn, Johnson, Morton and T. Sheldon.

**Staff:** Jennifer Ziegler (786-7316)

**Background:** Current law requires a child restraint system in an automobile for children under three and does not make distinct requirements based on weight.

Enforcement of seatbelt violations may only be accomplished as a secondary enforcement action when a driver of a motor vehicle has been detained for a suspected violation of traffic laws.

**Summary of Bill:** If a child is less than one year of age, the child must be properly restrained in a rear-facing infant seat. From ages one to four and/or less than 40 pounds, a child must travel in a forward facing child safety seat. From ages four to eight and/or less than 80 pounds, a child must be restrained in a child booster seat. Children over the age of eight that weigh more than 80 pounds must be properly restrained with a safety belt. The child restraint requirements do not apply for children over 40 pounds in a vehicle that only has a lap belt.

If the vehicle has an air bag, children under the age of eight must be transported in the back seat of the vehicle.

Seatbelt violations are enforced as primary enforcement actions for children younger than 16. Seatbelt violation remain secondary enforcement actions for adults. The Traffic Safety Commission must conduct an educational campaign regarding the new seatbelt requirements.

This act may be known and cited as the Anton Skeen Act.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Testimony For:** Thirty-seven people in Washington have died since January because of car accidents. Sixty-five percent of those people were not wearing seat belts. Washington is the only west coast state with secondary enforcement of seat belt laws. Seventeen states use primary enforcement of seat belt laws. Adults who do not use seat belts often do not use seat belts for their children.

New child restraint requirements are necessary because current requirements are out-dated and harm children. Using a seat belt without a booster seat can result in severe harm to a small child. The United States is behind the rest of the world in child safety provisions for automobiles.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** PRO: Senator Costa, prime sponsor; John Moffat, Traffic Safety Commission; Autumn Alexander Skeen; Rick Bart, Snohomish County Sheriff; Deputy John Cummings, Snohomish County; Dr. Abraham Bergman, Harborview Medical Center; Suzanne Mayr, Mary Bridge Children's Hospital; Steve Blackstone, National Transportation Safety Board.