



SUPPORT SB 2627 - Amendment 4 - (Sen. Ira Silverstein) **Child Safety Bicycle Helmet Law - Education Not Punishment**

The Illinois Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (ICAAP) and its partners urge you to support legislation to require helmet use for children on bicycles. **Amendment 4**, while requiring children under sixteen to wear helmets, removes all proposed penalties and converts the proposal to one of education of parents.

The bill establishes that helmets are required for children on bicycles as Illinois policy. With **Amendment 4**, if a police officer witnesses a child riding a bicycle without wearing a helmet, the officer is authorized to (“may”) issue a warning to the parent or guardian of the child, of the violation. No other sanctions are imposed. With this warning process, parents and teachers will have the new tool of emphasizing that helmet-wearing is the law in Illinois. Police officers and school personnel can promote the new legal requirement during school Bicycle Safety Week activities. When believed warranted, police officers are authorized (but not required) to directly notify a child’s parent or guardian of violations. This amendment moves the bill’s focus away from penalizing and toward educating.

BIKE INJURIES ARE DEVASTATING AND DEADLY

- In 2005, an estimated 494,712 of all bicycle-related injuries were treated in U.S. hospital emergency rooms. Approximately 53 percent of these were under the age of 15. (NHTSA, 1/08)
- Children 14 and younger accounted for 13% of 2006 bicycle-related fatalities, making this one of the most frequent causes of injury related death for young children. (NHTSA, 1/08)
- Bike injuries are most prevalent among Illinois children aged 5-14, with a rate of 17.5 per 100,000 children going to the emergency room or being hospitalized (Child Health Data Lab, 2008).
- Among Illinois children aged 5-14 who were admitted to emergency rooms for bike injuries, 40% had injuries to their head or neck. (CompData, 2008)

BIKE HELMETS SAVE LIVES

- Helmets reduce the risk of head injury by up to 88%, and reduce the risk of facial injury by 65%. (Thompson, 2001).
- Universal bike helmet use by children 4-15 would prevent 39,000 to 45,000 head injuries, and 18,000 to 55,000 scalp and face injuries annually. (NHTSA, 1/08)
- Reviews of scientific studies show that 1) legislation increases helmet use among cyclists, particularly younger age groups and those less likely to be using helmets prior to the law (Injury Prevention, 2006), and 2) legislation is effective in decreasing head injury rates. (Cochrane Collaboration, 2009)
- Bike-related head injury rates declined significantly (45%) in areas where legislation had been adopted compared with those that did not adopt legislation (27%) over a 4-year period. (Pediatrics, 11/02)

ILLINOIS NEEDS A CHILD HELMET LAW

- Almost all Illinois children (87% of middle school students, and 68-74% of high school students) reported riding bikes in the past 12 months. (YRBS, 2009)
- Despite the fact that nearly 70 percent of all fatal bicycle crashes involve head injuries, only about 20 to 25 percent of all bicyclists wear bicycle helmets. (NHTSA, 1/08)
- Illinois is behind in protecting its children from bicycle-related injury. 21 other states, the District of Columbia, and 150 or more municipal localities have enacted age-specific bicycle helmet laws. (NHTSA, 1/08).

BIKE HELMETS MEAN COST SAVINGS

- The annual cost of bicycle related injuries and deaths (for all ages) is \$8 billion. (NHTSA, 1/08)
- Bicycle head injuries are expensive; these injuries endure and require treatment for a lifetime. (NHTSA, 1/08)
- Every dollar spent on bike helmets saves society \$30 in indirect medical costs and other costs (NHTSA, 1/08)
- Bike helmets are affordable, as low as \$10 at widely available (Target, Wal-mart) stores, and as low as \$3-5 when purchased in bulk (www.prorider.com). Many community and hospital programs, such as Injury Free Coalition for Kids of Peoria, provide helmets for free to families and will be more likely to do so once the law is passed.

See Supporting Groups on Reverse Side

These organizations support child bicycle helmet laws:

- American Academy of Pediatrics, Illinois Chapter
- Brain Injury Association of Illinois
- Chicago Medical Legal Partnership for Children
- Children's Memorial Hospital
- Cook County Dept. of Public Health
- Health & Disability Advocates
- Helmets First!
- Illinois Academy of Family Physicians
- Illinois Association of School Nurses
- Illinois Chapter, Emergency Nurses Association
- Illinois Hospital Association
- Illinois State Medical Society
- Illinois Maternal and Child Health Coalition
- Loyola University Medical Center
- Quad Cities Bicycle Club
- Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago
- SafeKids Illinois, Chicago and Macon, Winnebago Counties
- Shriners Hospital for Children
- Stakeholders Collaboration to Improve Student Health
- Think First National Injury Prevention (7 IL Chapters)