

Kentucky enhances booster seat law

Governor Steve Beshear joined local officials, child-safety advocates and medical staff at the University of Kentucky June 15 [to ceremonially sign](#) long-awaited legislation to improve child passenger safety in motor vehicles.

[House Bill 315](#) brings Kentucky's booster seat law in line with 31 other states, including all seven neighboring states.

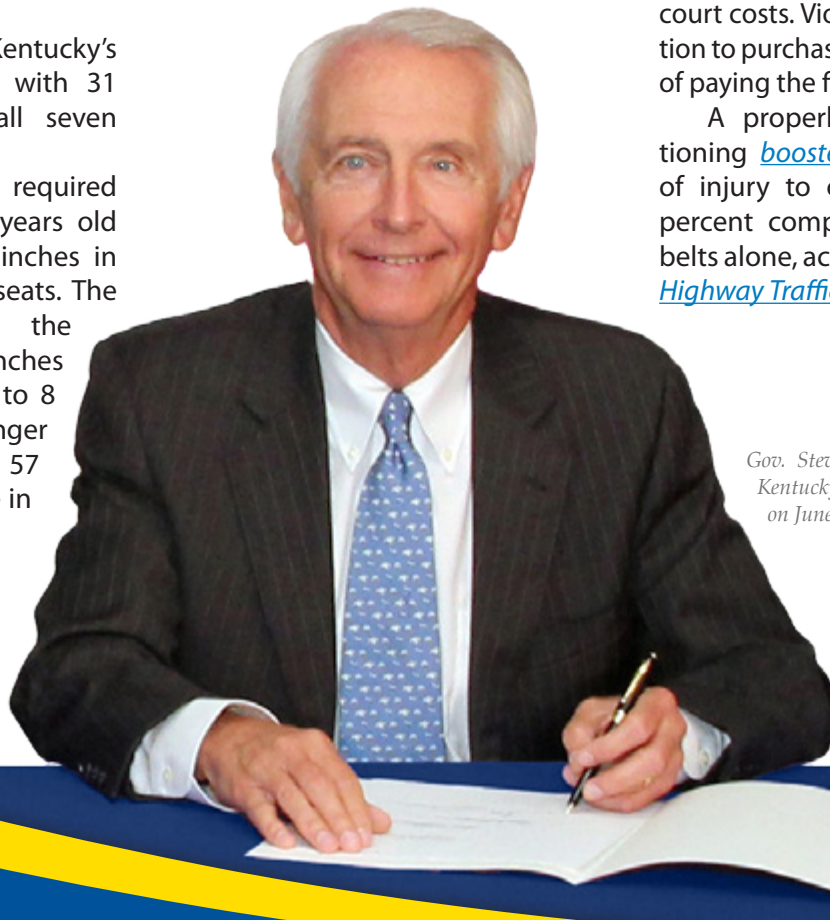
The previous law required children younger than 7 years old and between 40 and 50 inches in height to ride in booster seats. The enhanced bill increases the height requirement to 57 inches and the age requirement to 8 years old. Children younger than 8 but taller than 57 inches will not have to ride in a booster seat.

"Passage of this bill provides greater safety and protection to our most precious asset – our children," Gov. Beshear said. "I commend the many advocate groups who have

long-supported this legislation and both chambers for working together to enhance Kentucky's booster seat law."

Effective June 24, 2015, the bill requires law enforcement officers to issue citations with a \$30 fine and no court costs. Violators will have the option to purchase a booster seat instead of paying the fine.

A properly installed, belt-positioning [booster seat](#) lowers the risk of injury to children by nearly 60 percent compared with using seat belts alone, according to the [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#).



Gov. Steve Beshear ceremonially signs Kentucky's enhanced booster seat law on June 15, 2015.

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Director's Message — Bill Bell



I love a good challenge. If you tell me I can't do something then I want to try. The only problem is that sometimes my age gets in the way, especially when it comes to physical challenges. My family and I recently moved and due to short notice (and stubbornness on my part), we moved ourselves. We did have the assistance of some young men who happen to have stronger backs, etc., but it was still pretty tough.

Many of us are challenged in some aspects of our career or work. The Office of Highway Safety requires agencies applying for grants to set goals for crash

reductions and provide other quantitative measurements.

When I started at the Kentucky Office of Highway Safety our Texting While Driving law was in the first year of existence. Folks were saying then "it will not be enforceable." But, then why pass a bill? Some would say "well, it's just good policy." So, we decided to see for ourselves whether it would be enforceable.

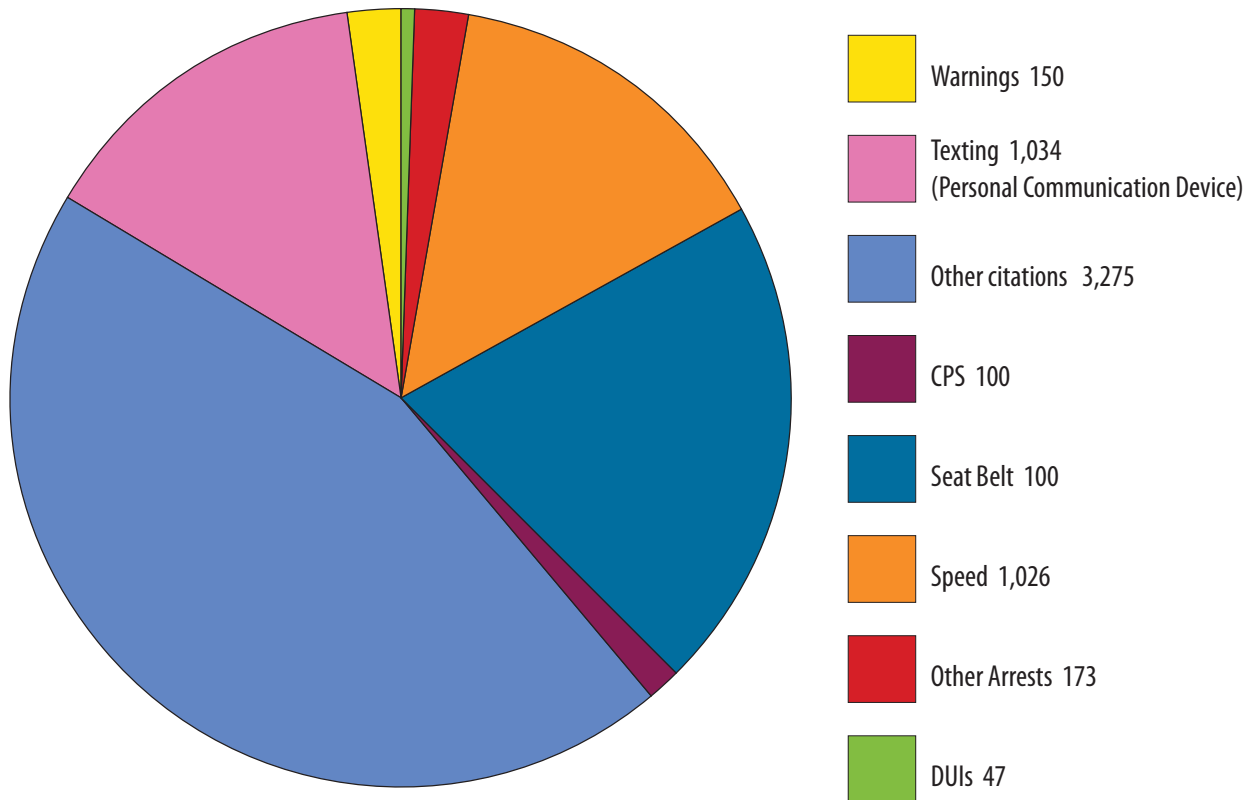
In the fall of 2013, we asked a handful of local agencies to do high visibility enforcement for texting while driving. In roughly eight weeks these agencies wrote nearly 400 citations. This was more

than was written in the entire year in 2011. And, we found in a sampling that judges were convicting 86 percent of "personal communication device" charges.

We followed this pilot program with a month-long enforcement campaign in April 2014 with nine agencies across the state. As with other campaigns, there are usually collateral benefits such as Frankfort Police Department's \$30,000 property seizure in a drug bust due to a texting while driving stop.

Due to its success, we increased the number of agencies to 13 in 2015 and had the following results:

7,300 Total citations/contacts



SafetySpotlight ≡

Law enforcement officers, agencies honored for seat belt and child restraint enforcement



Louisville Metro Police Department Officer Ronald Fey, pictured with KOHS Executive Director Bill Bell, was honored at the awards for writing the most citations – 997.

Ceremony salutes efforts to save lives on Kentucky roadways

The Kentucky Office of Highway Safety (KOHS) honored 137 law enforcement officers from 119 agencies across the Commonwealth for their efforts to increase the use of seat belts and child restraints in motor vehicles.

The fifth annual Governor's Occupant Protection Awards ceremony was July 28 at the Marriott Griffin Gate in Lexington. Awards were presented to officers with the most occupant protection citations in each agency and division. There are six divisions, broken down by number of officers within the agency, plus a division for Kentucky State Police.

"Despite a wealth of data showing that seat belts and child restraints save lives, each year

hundreds of unrestrained motorists lose their lives on Kentucky roadways," KOHS Director Bill Bell said before presenting the awards. "These officers, their departments and agencies render a great service for public safety by enforcing our occupant protection laws."

There were 672 Kentucky highway fatalities in 2014, with 521 killed in motor vehicles. Of those 521 fatalities, 61 percent (319) were not wearing a seat belt.

"I applaud Kentucky's efforts to keep its citizens safe on the road," National Safety Council President Deborah Hersman said. "The seat belt usage rate increased with the passage of the primary law from 67 percent in 2006 to 86 percent in 2014. Also, I'm pleased to hear

of the enhanced booster seat law that follows federal guidelines and protects children up to 57 inches."

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), seat belts, when worn correctly, are proven to reduce the risk of fatal injuries to front-seat occupants by 45 percent – and by 60 percent in pickup trucks, SUVs and minivans. Also according to NHTSA, a properly installed, belt-positioning booster seat lowers the risk of injury to children by nearly 60 percent, compared with seat belts alone.

Photos of award recipients can be viewed on [Governor Beshear's FlickrR page](#).

where's baby?

Look before you lock.

Leaving kids alone in cars is illegal in many states, including Kentucky. According to [Bryan's Law](#) passed in 2000, a person can be charged with second-degree manslaughter if he or she "wantonly causes the death of another" through operation of a vehicle or by leaving a child in a hot car. Lesser penalties can be applied if the child doesn't die.

Bryan's Law was named after Bryan Puckett from Winchester, Kentucky, who died in 1999 after he was left in a car by his baby sitter.

More than 630 children died in hot cars between 1998 and 2014 nationwide. [Learn why](#) habitually checking all the seats in your car before locking the door can save a child's life. For more information, check out a video produced by SAFE KIDS Worldwide.

EventCalendar

An up-to-date and detailed listing will be on our [Events Facebook page](#)

Did you know?



Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over

The annual [Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over](#) campaign is Aug. 21 to Sept. 7. This nationwide effort includes high-visibility enforcement, high-profile events and federally-funded advertising through the [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration \(NHTSA\)](#).

Stop on Red Week

[National Stop on Red Week](#) is Aug. 2-8. Contact info@NCSRsafety.org for tools and resources to promote the campaign in your area.

Child Passenger Safety Week

[National Child Passenger Safety Week](#) is Sept. 13-19, sponsored by NHTSA. [Find a car seat technician](#) in your area and make sure your child is properly using the [correct seat](#).

Drive Safely to Work Week

The [Network of Employers for Traffic Safety \(NETS\)](#) is sponsoring [Drive Safely to Work Week](#) Oct. 5-9. NETS provides a turnkey way to remind employees about safe driving practices.

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