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**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**  
869 PUNCHBOWL STREET  
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February 24, 2020  
2:00 P.M.  
State Capitol, Room 325



**H.B. 2004, H.D. 1**  
**RELATING TO CHILD PASSENGER RESTRAINTS**

House Committee on Judiciary

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The Department of Transportation **supports** H.B. 2004, H.D. 1. Keeping children safe on our roadways is one our highest priorities.

We support the raising of the age for rear facing, and increasing fines, as well as support the raising of child's age for vehicle operators to ensure that the child is properly restrained in a safety or booster seat.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, "infants and toddlers should ride in a rear-facing car safety seat as long as possible, until they reach the highest weight or height allowed by their seat. Most convertible seats have limits that will allow children to ride rear-facing for 2 years or more."

Currently, 11 states have requirements that children under the age of two be rear-facing. It is recommended that the State of Hawaii should also adopt these requirements.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.



Date: February 21, 2020

TO: Rep. Chris Lee, Chair  
Rep. Joy A. San Buenaventura, Vice Chair  
Members of Judiciary Committee

FR: Keiki Injury Prevention Coalition

RE: HB 2004 HD 1 - RELATING TO CHILD PASSENGER RESTRAINTS – IN SUPPORT  
Amends requirements for child passengers. Requires rear facing child safety seats for children under two years of age. Raises certain fines for violations.

Dear Chair Lee, Vice-Chair San Buenaventura, and members of the committee,

The Keiki Injury Prevention Coalition strongly supports HB 2004 HD1. Injury is one of the leading causes of death and disability in Hawaii for all children, responsible for more deaths of children ages 1-17 than all other causes combined. Automobile safety has been our major focus as traffic related injuries continue to be a leading cause of death for Hawaii's children and youth.

We support requiring children to ride rear facing as long as possible and at least until age two years. The American Academy of Pediatrics guideline is that "infants and toddlers should ride in a rear-facing car safety seat as long as possible, until they reach the highest weight or height allowed by their seat. Most convertible seats have limits that will allow children to ride rear-facing for 2 years or more." If enacted, Hawai'i will join 14 other states and the District of Columbia in adopting this national standard to protect the most vulnerable motor vehicle passengers.

The rear facing position protects the child's brain and spinal cord, which are the body parts most prone to devastating and permanent injuries in the case of trauma. Infants' and small children's heads are larger and heavier in proportion to their bodies. This can cause significant injury to the neck and spine when crash forces are applied to them. Rear facing car seats spread crash forces over the whole area of a child's back, head and neck, protecting the spinal cord from snapping which will lead to death or permanent severe injury.

We also support increasing fines to reflect the significant risk for injury in violating this law and support other changes to the statute to ensure that every child is properly restrained in a child restraint, booster seat, or seat belt as appropriate for their age and height.

KIPCC's mission is to prevent and reduce injuries to children in Hawaii. With the help of our members, community partners and volunteers we have made major strides in improving vehicle occupant protection for children in our state. Safety Seat Inspection Stations and community events statewide offer hands-on education free of charge.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

*Karen Tessier*

Karen Tessier  
KIPCC Child Passenger Safety Program Coordinator

**HB-2004-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/23/2020 10:50:09 AM

Testimony for JUD on 2/24/2020 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Lisa Dau	Individual	Support	No

Comments: