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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
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HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-5097

January 29, 2020
1:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room 225

LATE

S.B. 2106
RELATING TO CHILD PASSENGER RESTRAINTS

Senate Committee on Transportation

The Department of Transportation **supports** S.B. 2106. 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 the 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.

January 29, 2020

TO: Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair Transportation
Senator Breene Harimoto, Vice-Chair Transportation
Members of the Senate Transportation Committee

FR: AAA HAWAII

RE: **SB2106 RELATING TO CHILD PASSENGER RESTRAINTS. - 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 Inouye, Vice-Chair Harimoto and members of the committee,

AAA Hawaii strongly supports SB2106 introduced by Senator Inouye. Many states have enacted, and others are considering, this very important step to improve safety by requiring children younger than two to be in a rear-facing child safety seat. If enacted, Hawaii will join 11 other states that have adopted this new national standard to protect the most vulnerable and youngest motor vehicle passengers.

The American Academy of Pediatricians agrees that children should ride rear facing as long as possible and at least until two years of age or until they reach the weight limits of their seat. A 2007 University of Virginia study found that children were 75 percent less likely to suffer severe or fatal injuries in a crash if they are facing the rear. Requiring children to stay rear facing until the age of two is the easiest way to keep children safe while on the road.

Rear facing car seats are constructed to allow children to "ride down" the crash, whereas forward facing seats, much like seat belts, hold occupants in their seats. For babies, this is a critical difference. Their heads are often larger and heavier in proportion to their bodies, which can cause significant trauma to the neck and spine in a crash if they are forward facing. Rear facing car seats spread frontal crash forces over the whole area of a child's back, head and neck and they prevent the head from "snapping" relative to the body in a frontal crash.

AAA advocates for measures to improve traffic safety, including vulnerable road users such as child passengers in an automobile. We support growing legislative efforts in many states to enact more effective child safety seat laws. AAA also provides free educational materials and free community programs that help new parents make sure car seats are properly installed.

Since 1915, AAA Hawaii has been a leader in motorist services and a strong advocate for traffic safety. With more than 165,000 members, traffic safety is the cornerstone of our mission in the state. SB2106 moves the state in the right direction in further improving the safety of children in automobiles. We respectfully urge your YES vote on SB2106.

Sincerely,

Liane Sumida

Liane Sumida
General Manager

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