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A Component Society of the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine

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February 23, 2010

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Utah State Legislature
350 North State Street, Suite #350
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Salt Lake City, UT 84114

SUBJECT: Opposition to HB 113, Child Restraint Amendments

WOEMA, an organization of Occupational Medicine physicians representing five western states and dedicated to the promotion of occupational and environmental health and safety, has concerns about environmental and public health risks as related to public safety. We strongly feel that appropriate usage of booster seats and other restraints during car trips represents an important protection for infants and other children, and we would be opposed to a measure that weakens such protections.

Accordingly, **we urge the defeat of HB 113 (Child Restraint Amendments)** which seeks to exempt use of booster seats for children, from 5 to 8 years of age, when there are not enough booster seats in the car and when the trip is within four miles of the home and on roads with speed limits less than 45 miles per hour.

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for children ages 1 to 8, and most accidents happen close to home. A 2005 Report entitled Partners for Child Passenger Safety Fact and Trend showed that in crashes with children under age 16 in the vehicle 57% of crashes occurred 10 minutes or less from home. Nearly 60% of the children involved in these crashes were 8 years old or younger. Furthermore, trips involving normal daily activities and recreational trips accounted for the majority of crashes (79%). (For more details, see [http://jcots.state.va.us/pdf/2006/PCPS-StateFarmChildRestraint Report.pdf](http://jcots.state.va.us/pdf/2006/PCPS-StateFarmChildRestraint%20Report.pdf))

According to the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, children in booster seats are 59% less likely to be killed in a car crash than those who are unrestrained. Additionally, booster seats reduce the risk for injury to children aged 4-7 years by 59% compared to seatbelt use alone (JAMA, 2003;289(21):2835-2840).

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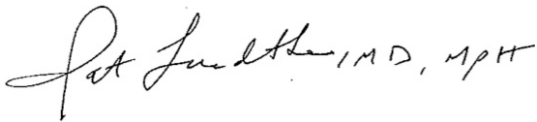
Since Utah adopted booster seat legislation in 2008, infants aged 4-7 years who are involved in traffic crashes are now 55% more likely to be restrained in a booster seat. The important conclusion is that use of booster seats for children from 5 to 8 years old saves lives.

In summary, we urge you to stand for proven methods to protect the lives of children, and to oppose HB 113.

Sincerely,



Paul Papanek, MD, MPH
WOEMA President



Patrick F. Luedtke MD, MPH
Member, WOEMA Board of Directors,
and Director, Unified State Laboratories, Utah Department of Health