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# Preserve the Primary Seat Belt Law

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## The Primary Seat Belt Law — Living Up to Its Promise

- Since it became effective in June, 2009, the primary seat belt law has increased seat belt compliance from 87 percent to a record-high 92 percent.
- In that time, Minnesota has recorded 69 fewer unbelted fatalities and 179 fewer unbelted serious injuries compared with 2008, the year before the law was enacted. More people are surviving crashes and experiencing less severe injuries.
- Despite progress, each year 160 unbelted motorists are killed on Minnesota roads — more than half of the total motor vehicle occupant traffic deaths.
- A primary law would have the greatest impact on Minnesotans who are least likely to buckle up and more likely to die in crashes — teens, young males and residents in Greater Minnesota.

## Minnesotans Will All Pay the Price for a Repeal of Primary

Minnesota and the Legislature are currently facing a huge, unresolved budget deficit. Repealing primary worsens the situation. Consider these factors:

- Minnesotans pay for unbelted crashes — of all Minnesota traffic crashes, 74 percent of all associated costs are paid by citizens not involved in the crashes.
- In a three-year period, the economic impact of unbelted traffic deaths and injuries to Minnesota was \$1.1 billion. This translates to more than \$500 per household.
- Unbelted motorists have hospital charges that are 60 percent higher than those buckled up. This dramatically and negatively impacts our health care costs and insurance premiums for all.
- All government payer sources, including state-supported Medicaid, are charged \$42 million each year for unbelted motorist injuries.
- Without a primary law, seat belt use compliance is expected to drop. This would result in more severe injury crashes as well as increased response costs and time from police, fire and other emergency responders to crashes in which occupants are unbelted.
- Last year, Minnesota had the fewest traffic fatalities since World War II. Minnesota now has the third lowest traffic deaths in the country. Repealing the primary seat belt enforcement law will threaten Minnesota's remarkable progress in reducing deaths and injuries.

## Minnesotans Support the Primary Seat Belt Law

- 75 percent of Minnesotans support primary seat belt and its enforcement (2010 Department of Public Safety phone survey).

## No “Freedom of Choice” for Family Members of Unbelted Victims

- Unbelted motorists who are injured or killed become a strain and even a burden to society and family members. Yet, society and family members cannot exercise their “free choice” to opt out of responsibility to those killed or injured who were exercising their free choice not to wear a seat belt.

## Minnesota's Primary Seat Belt Law

- **It makes public safety sense • It makes economic sense • And it costs nothing**