

**MAKING THE MEDIA WORK FOR YOUR CAUSE:
PASSING A PRIMARY BELT LAW IN
MASSACHUSETTS**



Mary Maguire
Director, Public/Legislative Affairs
AAA Southern New England
Chair, Belts Ensure a Safer Tomorrow
Lifesavers Conference 2014

FIGHTING PBL FATIGUE

- Passing a PBL is a 30-year struggle in MA
- In 1986, New PBL was repealed within a year
- Extensive media coverage/numbness to numbers
- Many legislators are tired of the issue
- Secondary law is sufficient
- MA: Low Fatality Rate





MEET THE BEST COALITION

- AAA
- Medical Professionals/Boston Children's Hospital
- Brain Injury Association of MA
- Law Enforcement/Firefighters/EMT's
- SADD/Safe Kids/MADD Massachusetts
- MA Teachers Association
- Safe Roads Alliance/Befriend a Traffic Reporter!
- Media Outreach from Entire Coalition



Helping Shape the Law Enforcement Media Message

- Belt Use Cuts Crash Fatality Rate by 45%
- Ejection Risk 30x Greater in Unbelted Crashes
- More than 75% of Ejected Occupants Die
- Why don't we hear more often: "Speed, Alcohol, and NO SEAT BELT USE were factors."
- Urge Police/Media to mention seatbelt use



Lack of Seat Belt Use a Key Factor

- Conversation with MA State Police Spokesperson David Procopio
- Outreach to News Directors/Policy Discussion
- Outreach to Reporters/Producers



STATE HOUSE 
NEWS SERVICE

- Forge Relationships with Political Reporters
- Highlight the Importance of PBL/Priority Traffic Safety Issues
- Provide information/updates

Sen. Timilty, others shift on seatbelt law

Now favor letting police pull over drivers not buckled up
BY: Colleen Quinn
October 04, 2013



Make Criticism Work for You



Lack Of Seat Belt Enforcement Law Weighs On Mass. Traffic Safety Grade

By Colleen Quinn January 22, 2014

BOSTON – Massachusetts ranks among states with good highway and traffic safety laws covering texting restrictions, teen driving, and booster seat usage, but failed to earn the highest overall mark from a national highway advocacy group because the state still lacks a primary enforcement seat belt law.

In its annual report card released Wednesday morning, **Advocates for Highway & Auto Safety** gave Massachusetts the second highest overall ranking, “yellow” on its color-coded scale. A yellow grade means the state meets the majority of the advocacy group’s requirements for traffic safety laws.

Turning Tough Report to TV



Tough Report to Positive Print

Mass. ranks poorly in seat belt laws, high in overall driver safety

Written by Sarah Capungan

Published Jan 26, 2014

“Mary Maguire, director of public and legislative affairs at AAA Southern New England, a motor club and travel organization that serves New England, said the organization fully supports a primary seat belt enforcement law.

“The primary seat belt bill is a win-win,” she said. “It’s a win in terms of saving human lives, it’s a win in terms of saving money and time for Massachusetts legislators to step up to the plate and do what 33 other states have done and pass a primary seat belt law.”

AAA Southern New England is also working toward implementing an interlock bill, which mandates that first-time DUI offenders must have an ignition interlock license. The interlock device works as a Breathalyzer and does not allow a driver to operate their vehicle if it detects alcohol.

“It allows you to resume your normal life and stay sober,” Maguire said. “It’s been proven that the interlock devices are the most effective piece of technology that we have because it separates the drunk driver from the vehicle.”

Make Data Media Friendly

University of Massachusetts Study of Minority Belt Use: 54% Hispanics, 65% African Americans

Law pushed after study shows Mass. Seat belt use dropping

By [The Associated Press](#), The Associated Press on December 10, 2011 at 12:00 PM, updated December 10, 2011 at 2:33 PM

BOSTON (AP) — A coalition is pushing for a new seat belt enforcement law after a study showed that seat belt use in Massachusetts is among the lowest in the country.

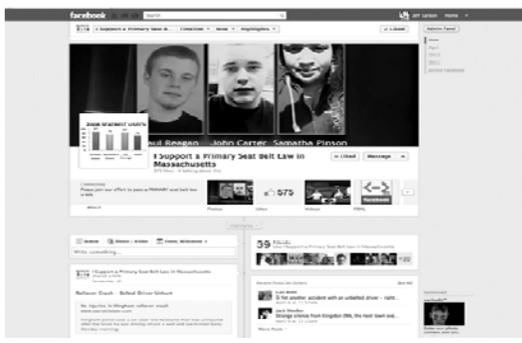
According to a University of Massachusetts study prepared for the state, seat belt use overall is down slightly from last year to 73 percent. **The study also found that the use of seat belts by teenagers dropped 3.6 percent to below 69 percent.**

The [Belts Ensure a Safer Tomorrow coalition](#) is renewing its call for lawmakers to take action on a primary enforcement bill that would allow police to stop drivers solely because people in their cars are not wearing seat belts.

"This change is expected to increase seat belt use by 13 percent, according to federal research," the coalition said on its Facebook page. "This change would save an estimated 27 lives, 1000 serious injuries and \$260 million in health and related expenses per year in Massachusetts."

Currently, police in Massachusetts can only enforce seat belt laws if a person is being stopped for another offense.

I Support a Primary Seat Belt Law in Massachusetts



Putting a Human Face on "Natalie's Bill" Remembering Natalie De Leon (1985-2006)

Natalie De Leon was a vibrant 21 year-old woman. On July 2, 2006, Natalie and her boyfriend were on their way to visit a friend when her boyfriend was forced to swerve and their car rolled over. They were not speeding or using alcohol, but Natalie, who was not buckled in, was ejected from the car and was killed. "The Friends of Natalie" was started by her mother, Beatriz Fuentes, in order to raise awareness of the importance of seat belt use. "If my daughter's tragedy can save lives and prevent brain injury, she will not have died in vain," says Beatriz.



For this reason, BEST has dedicated this bill to Natalie and her family. With your help and support, we will see "Natalie's Bill" passed by the Massachusetts legislature this session.

My Son: Saved by a Seat Belt



Share the Message: Repurpose Media Materials