

Governor Quinn Signs Traffic Safety Measures

Written by Andrew Mason
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New Laws Will Boost State's Efforts to Increase Seatbelt Use and Prevent Traffic Fatalities

CHICAGO – June 27, 2011. Governor Pat Quinn today was joined by law enforcement officers, public safety officials and a bipartisan group of lawmakers to sign two traffic safety measures as families throughout the state prepare for the July 4th holiday weekend.

“Over the Fourth of July weekend and throughout the year, we must ensure our roads are safe when many of us will be traveling to see family and friends,” said Governor Quinn. “These new laws are common sense measures that will help all motorists in Illinois arrive at their destinations safely.”

House Bill 219 requires all passengers in a vehicle to wear a seatbelt, regardless of age or where they sit. Under currently law, people in the front seat of a vehicle must use seat belts, but backseat riders are only required to buckle up if they are under 18-years-old. Emergency vehicles, buses and taxicabs are exempt from the new law.

The bill was sponsored by sponsored by Senate President John Cullerton (D-Chicago) and the late Rep. Mark Beaubien (R-Wauconda). It was the last bill sponsored by Rep. Beaubien before his recent passing. The new law takes effect Jan. 1, 2012.

“What’s tremendous about this law is that there is no question that it will save people’s lives,” said Senate President Cullerton.

In 2010, Illinois experienced one of its best years ever in traffic safety. For the first time since 1921, Illinois has seen two consecutive years with less than 1,000 traffic fatalities. Statewide seat belt usage increased from 64.5 percent in 1998 to nearly 93 percent in 2010, contributing

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to the reduced fatality rate.

“The Illinois State Police is proud to support legislation which has a positive and direct impact on the safety of the motoring public and reduces the risk of injury to passengers,” said Illinois State Police Director Hiram Grau. “We will continue to partner with local and state agencies in support of enforcement initiatives and programs which effectively target and reduce traffic crash fatalities in Illinois.”

Governor Quinn also signed House Bill 1315, which prohibits passengers from riding in trailers, semitrailers, farm wagons and other vehicles while they are being towed on a public highway. Exceptions are made for farm-related activities and parades. The legislation was sponsored by Rep. John D’Amico (D-Chicago) and Sen. Toi Hutchinson (D-Chicago Heights) and takes effect Jan. 1, 2012.

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