

House Bill 1257
House Transportation Committee
Representative Dan Ruby, Chairman
January 28, 2021

Chairman Ruby and members of the House Transportation Committee, my name is Sergeant Wade Kadrmaz, and I am the Safety and Education Officer for the North Dakota Highway Patrol. I am here today on behalf of my agency to testify in opposition to House Bill 1257.

On January 15, 2021 the Highway Patrol provided testimony in support of Senate Bill 2121, which would require all occupants of a motor vehicle to wear a seat belt and make it a primary offense. Senate Bill 2121 passed the Senate with a vote of 28-18 and will therefore be considered by the House. House Bill 1257 removes the requirement of anyone over the age of 18 to wear a seat belt and contradicts the intent of Senate Bill 2121 which enhances safety on our roadways.

Seat belts are the first line of defense against irresponsible driving behaviors. Law enforcement officers across the state issue thousands of citations each year to drivers for various crash causing violations such as speed, distracted driving, and impaired driving. These behaviors have persisted since the highway patrol was established in 1935 and, sadly, there is no indication that these crash causing behaviors will stop or even be drastically reduced which will continue to put the lives of everyone using our roads at risk. Until every motorist chooses to make safe driving decisions every time they drive, it is imperative to take steps to reinforce the use of seatbelts for all occupants in the vehicle.

Enhancing North Dakota's seatbelt law is a decisive step in saving lives and preventing serious injury on our roadways. House Bill 1257 weakens current seat belt laws and negates the effectiveness of the crucial role seat belts play in saving lives.

Chairman Ruby that concludes my testimony and I can answer any questions the committee may have.