

Proclamation 5210 of June 18, 1984

National Child Passenger Safety Awareness Day, 1984

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Now that school sessions have come to a close and many families are preparing for summer vacations, it is especially appropriate to remind all Americans of the importance of child passenger safety. Children who are not buckled into child safety seats or safety belts are subject to great risks of serious injury in motor vehicle accidents because their less developed bodies afford them little protection.

It is a tragic fact that motor vehicle collisions are the primary cause of death and crippling injuries for children in the United States. From 1978 through 1982, nearly 3,400 children under five years old were killed in motor vehicle collisions, and more than 230,000 others were seriously injured. All Americans must do their best to reduce these senseless tragedies.

Fortunately, in the last few months, much has been done to protect young children travelling by car. We know that the proper use of child safety seats reduces the risk of death by up to 90 percent and can prevent up to 67 percent of all injuries. Through the voluntary efforts of many individuals and citizens groups, 47 States and the District of Columbia have recently enacted mandatory child restraint laws. Unfortunately, surveys show that only 40 percent of children under five years old are being protected by child safety seats and that 70 percent of the seats are not being used properly. In order to emphasize the importance of correct installation and use of child safety seats, many private and public organizations alike are initiating educational programs to achieve that end. For example, the National Automobile Dealers Association, the National Child Passenger Safety Association, and the American Academy of Pediatrics are currently sponsoring child safety clinics throughout the Nation to check on and demonstrate the correct use and installation of child restraint systems.

It is particularly vital for parents to understand the special risk which their children face as motor vehicle passengers and to educate their children about the importance of child safety seats each time they ride in the car. As adults, we all should remember that our own use of safety belts in our car can be a particularly good lesson for our children.

To emphasize the combined efforts of government and private sector organizations to promote child passenger safety throughout our Nation, the Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 289, has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation designating June 18, 1984, as "National Child Passenger Safety Awareness Day."

Ante, p. 246.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim June 18, 1984, as National Child Passenger Safety Awareness Day. I encourage all Americans to observe this occasion by participating in appropriate programs, ceremonies and activities to educate motor vehicle drivers about the tragic consequences of neglecting the safety of our children when they travel by automobile.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 18th day of June, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and eighth.

RONALD REAGAN