

EXHIBIT 3
DATE 1-12-05
HB 52

Testimony for House Bill No. 52

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, I am Jo Ann Walsh Dotson, the Bureau Chief of the Family and Community Health Bureau in the Department of Public Health and Human Services:

On behalf of the Department of Public Health and Human Services, **we offer our support of HB 52**, which requires the use of child safety restraints in motor vehicles for children under 7 years of age or who weigh less than 60 pounds; making a violation of the requirement that children be properly restrained a standard violation by exempting children from the provision prohibiting law enforcement from stopping a driver who is in violation of seatbelt requirements; and amending sections 61-9-420 and 61-13-103.

Montana's Fetal, Infant and Child Mortality Review program has identified motor vehicle crashes as accounting for over half of the unintentional injury deaths of all infants and children in this state. In 2001 and 2002, death certificates identified 45 child victims of motor vehicle incidents, and FICMR teams confirmed that 36 of these deaths were motor vehicle crash deaths.

Two infants died in motor vehicle crashes in this time period, and both were reported to have been in improperly used infant seats, and twenty-two of the 36 children who died in a motor vehicle crashes were reported to have been in vehicles where seat belts were present, but not used by the decedent.

FICMR teams reviewed 41 of the 45 deaths, and determined that 38 of these 41 deaths were definitely preventable. **One preventable death is one death too many**. We believe that this legislation will help keep children alive, and strongly lend our support to this legislation.

Committee:	Transportation
Hearing Date:	Wednesday, Jan 12
Hearing Time:	3 p.m.
Place:	Rm 172