

**– News Release –**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Governor Kempthorne to sign new child booster seat bill into law during ceremony at Lowell Elementary School kindergarten class on Wednesday (March 30)**

BOISE – Governor Dirk Kempthorne will sign into law Wednesday a bill to increase safety for children riding in automobiles. The signing ceremony will be held in Ms. Yvette Pfaff's kindergarten class at Lowell Elementary School, 1507 N. 28<sup>th</sup> St., at 10 a.m. Wednesday (March 30).

The bill, introduced by Rep. Richard Wills of Glenns Ferry and Sen. John McGee of Caldwell, extends the age of children required to use car booster seats from 4 to 6. The law removes the weight restriction of 40 pounds.

Idaho crash data (1999-2003) show that nine children ages 4-6 were killed, 80 were seriously injured and 352 had visible injuries. Of those killed, 56 percent were not restrained at all, and of those seriously injured, 47 percent were not restrained at all. The Office of Highway Safety estimates Idaho would have recorded three or fewer fatalities, 19 fewer serious injuries and 120 fewer visible injuries had all of those children been properly buckled into child safety restraints.

Motor vehicle crashes are the No. 1 killer of children in the U.S. About 60 percent of children killed in crashes each year are completely unrestrained. Statistics indicate the number of deaths and injuries could be cut in half if every child passenger in a motor vehicle was properly restrained at the time of impact.

Law enforcement, hospitals, health-care providers, insurance companies and other safety organizations supported changes to the existing Idaho law. In addition, a survey commissioned by AAA Idaho found more than two-to-one support for raising the safety standards among registered voters in Idaho.

The price of booster seats ranges from \$15-40.