

108TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1337

To establish an incentive program to promote effective safety belt laws and increase safety belt use.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 25, 2003

Mr. SMITH introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

A BILL

To establish an incentive program to promote effective safety belt laws and increase safety belt use.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Safe, Efficient Auto-
5 mobile Travel to Better Ensure Lives in Transit
6 (SEATBELT) Act of 2003”.

7 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

8 Congress makes the following findings:

9 (1) According to the National Highway Traffic
10 Safety Administration (NHTSA), motor vehicle

1 crashes are responsible for 95 percent of all trans-
2 portation-related deaths and 99 percent of all trans-
3 portation-related injuries.

4 (2) Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause
5 of death for Americans between the ages of 1 and
6 34.

7 (3) It is estimated that, in 2002, 42,850 people
8 were killed and approximately 3,000,000 people were
9 injured in vehicle crashes.

10 (4) NHTSA estimates that if safety belt use
11 were to increase from 75 percent to 90 percent,
12 nearly 4,000 lives would be saved each year.

13 **SEC. 3. SAFETY BELT INCENTIVE GRANTS.**

14 (a) REQUIREMENTS FOR GRANT PROGRAMS.—

15 (1) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 4 of title 23, United
16 States Code, is amended by adding at the end the
17 following new section:

18 **“§ 412. Safety belt incentive grants**

19 “(a) PRIMARY ENFORCEMENT SAFETY BELT USE
20 LAW INCENTIVE GRANTS.—

21 “(1) ELIGIBILITY.—The Secretary shall make a
22 grant to each State that, as determined by the Sec-
23 retary, has in effect a primary enforcement safety
24 belt use law.

1 “(2) AMOUNT OF GRANT.—The amount of a
2 grant for which a State qualifies under this sub-
3 section shall equal the amount of funds allocated to
4 the State under section 402 of this title for fiscal
5 year 2003 multiplied by 2.

6 “(3) DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS.—Funds award-
7 ed to a State under this subsection shall be distrib-
8 uted over a 2-year period.

9 “(4) FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR GRANT PRO-
10 GRAM.—Forty percent of the funds made available
11 to carry out the occupant protection programs under
12 section 405 of this title in a fiscal year shall be
13 available for grants under this subsection during
14 such fiscal year.

15 “(5) DISPOSITION OF UNUSED FUNDS.—Any
16 funds available for grants under this subsection that
17 have not been awarded by the end of fiscal year
18 2008 shall be made available for the safety belt
19 usage grant program under subsection (b).

20 “(b) SAFETY BELT USAGE AWARD GRANTS.—

21 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall carry
22 out a program for making safety belt usage award
23 grants to eligible States. The program shall be de-
24 signed to—

1 “(A) maximize the effectiveness of the
2 awarded funds and the fairness of the distribu-
3 tion of such funds;

4 “(B) increase the national seat belt usage
5 rate as expeditiously as possible;

6 “(C) reward States that maintain a seat
7 belt usage rate above 85 percent (as determined
8 by the National Highway Traffic Safety Admin-
9 istration); and

10 “(D) reward States that demonstrate an
11 increase in their seat belt usage rates.

12 “(2) FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR GRANT PRO-
13 GRAM.—Sixty percent of the funds made available to
14 carry out the occupant protection programs under
15 section 405 of this title in a fiscal year shall be
16 available for grants under this subsection during
17 such fiscal year.

18 “(c) USE OF FUNDS.—Grants awarded under this
19 section may be used to carry out activities under this title.

20 “(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

21 “(1) PASSENGER MOTOR VEHICLE.—The term
22 ‘passenger motor vehicle’ has the meaning given the
23 term in section 405(f)(5) of this title.

24 “(2) PRIMARY ENFORCEMENT SAFETY BELT
25 USE LAW.—The term ‘primary enforcement safety

1 belt use law’ means a law that meets the criteria for
2 such laws published by the Secretary in a rule relat-
3 ing to the grant program under this section.

4 “(3) SAFETY BELT.—The term ‘safety belt’ has
5 the meaning given the term in section 405(f)(6) of
6 this title.”.

7 (2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sec-
8 tions at the beginning of that chapter is amended by
9 inserting after the item relating to section 411 the
10 following new item:

“412. Safety belt incentive grants.”.

11 (b) INTERIM FINAL RULE.—Not later than 90 days
12 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary
13 of Transportation shall publish an interim final rule listing
14 the criteria for awarding grants pursuant to section 412
15 of title 23, United States Code, as added by subsection
16 (a), including the criteria to be used by the Secretary in
17 determining whether a law is a primary enforcement safe-
18 ty belt use law for purposes of such section.

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