



April 5, 2015

Chairman Frazier
1020 N Street Room 112
Sacramento, CA 95814

AB 53 (Garcia) Rear-facing car seats
AAP-CA Position: SUPPORT

Dear Chairman Frazier,

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California, representing the 5,000 board-certified pediatrician members of all four California AAP regional chapters statewide (Ch 1 – Northern California, Ch 2 – Greater Los Angeles, Ch 3 – San Diego, and Ch 4 – Orange County), strongly supports proposed legislation AB 53 (Garcia). This bill would require the parent, legal guardian or the driver of a motor vehicle to secure a child younger than 2 years old in a rear-facing car seat, with exceptions as specified in current law (i.e., when a child’s physical unfitness, mental condition, or size makes the proper child restraint system impractical).

American Academy of Pediatrics policy, which is based on a careful analysis of the evidence, states that children “...should be restrained in a rear-facing car seat until they are 2 years old or exceed the maximum height or weight requirements specified by the rear-facing seat manufacturer”.

Current California law already has a rear-facing car seat requirement until the one-year of age. Rear-facing car seats provide optimal support to the head and spine in the event of a crash. An infant younger than 2 years of age developmentally has a large head in proportion to the rest of his or her body, as well as structural features of their neck and spine that place the infant at particularly high risk of head and spine injuries in motor vehicle crashes. AB 53 would simply extend that requirement so that it would protect the health and safety of the child to age two.

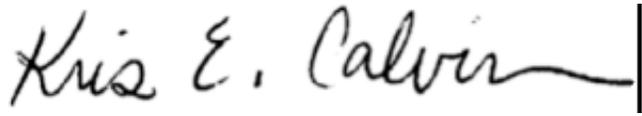
AB 53 is designed to prevent serious injury and death. Henary et al, in reviewing US crash data, found that children ages 0-23 months were significantly more likely to be seriously injured in forward-facing car seats than those in rear-facing seats. Even when data for older toddlers (12-23 months of age) were analyzed separately, the key findings held: they were still more likely to be seriously injured in forward-facing car seats.

Appropriate child safety seats reduce the rate of fatal injuries in infants and toddlers by 71% and 54% respectively.

Children who are not appropriately restrained and are involved in a motor vehicle accident can sustain life-long debilitating injuries or fatality. We care for these patients and see the catastrophic impact on not only the patient’s life, but also on the entire family unit.

California pediatricians strongly urge your AYE vote on AB 53.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kris E. Calvin". The signature is written in black ink and ends with a vertical line.

Kris Calvin
Chief Executive Officer
American Academy of Pediatrics, CA

CC: AAP-CA Leadership, Lydia Bourne, Office of Assembly Member Cristina Garcia