



## Media Release

May 24, 2006

### **BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation calls on British Columbians to support vehicle booster seat legislation**

*(Burnaby, B.C.):* The BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation is pleased with MLA Iain Black's (Port Moody-Westwood) introduction of a Private Members Bill last Monday that would require children to be 8 years and 36 kg (80 lbs) before they would be allowed to travel in a passenger vehicle without being seated in a child safety or booster seat. The BCAA TSF is calling on parents, health care providers and anyone concerned about child safety in British Columbia to support this initiative. The BCAA TSF invites the public to express their support of the Booster Seat legislation by contacting their office directly at 1-877-247-5551 (toll free in BC) or by visiting [www.tsf-bcaa.com](http://www.tsf-bcaa.com).

"In numerous cases, it has been clearly shown that children in the four-to-eight year age range are safer riding in booster seats, but because there is no law requiring them to do so, most parents don't use booster seats," says David Dunne, Director Provincial Programs for the BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation. "Through public awareness, we've been able to make modest gains in booster seat use, but it is clear that legislation combined with public education will substantially increase usage and improve the safety of kids riding in cars."

According to ICBC claims statistics, almost 860 children aged four-to-eight are injured or killed in traffic crashes each year in B.C. Many children are at significantly greater risk because they are being placed in adult seat belts too soon. Standard vehicle seatbelt systems are generally not designed for children less than 145 cm and weighing less than 36 kg – on average, children younger than nine years of age. Out-of-position lap belts can cause serious internal injuries and studies have shown that children restrained in seat belts alone are three times more likely to be injured in a motor vehicle collision than children in age-appropriate restraints. Internal injuries or spinal damage can occur because children too small for regular seatbelts may slouch forward, increasing the chances of 'submarining' out from under the lap and shoulder belt, or 'jack knifing' over a lap belt. Booster seats reduce the risk of serious injury and death by 60 per cent.

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“More children in BC die from injuries sustained in car crashes than any other cause. Children who are between 4 and 9 years of age are particularly vulnerable,” stated Dr. Murray Fyfe, Associate Chief Medical Health Officer for the Vancouver Island Health Authority. “Legislation has been an important contributor to the high rates of car seat use for younger children and seat belt use for adults. Legislation could also help increase booster seat use from the current low rate of 18 percent and may save the lives of 4 children each year in BC.”

Dr. Richard Stanwick, a member of the Canadian Paediatric Society's Injury Prevention Committee, referenced the Society's Report Card on Child Health, entitled "How Are We Doing?", by pointing out "Quebec and Ontario are moving forward with booster seat legislation and will receive high marks for this important initiative. With MLA Iain Black's legislative initiative, BC can further enhance its status in addressing important child health issues." In reference to the cost of preventing child injury in a car crash, Dr. Stanwick adds that, "Given the significant costs associated with the injuries arising from not using booster seats, booster seat legislation not only will save lives, but also reduce financial pressures on an already challenged health care system."

Dr. Todd Sorokan, President of the BC Pediatric Society adds that, “it is difficult as a pediatrician to see children seriously injured in a car crash who could have been protected by the use of a booster seat. This legislation would go a long way to preventing injuries in children up to 8 years old and 57 inches high (145 cm).

The BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation is a non-profit registered charity working with families, communities and business partners to reduce the number and severity of traffic crashes and injuries in B.C. The BCAA TSF believes in the necessity of legislating booster seats and encourages the public to support this initiative. **For more information** about child passenger safety, or to express your support of the Booster Seat initiative please visit [www.tsf-bcaa.com](http://www.tsf-bcaa.com) or call 1-877-247-5551 (toll free in BC).

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**Editors notes:**

Available Video: B-roll available of crash test dummy with no booster seat / lap and shoulder belt only.

Available for Interview: David Dunne, Director, Provincial Programs

**For further information, please contact:**

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