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SECRETARY OF STATE

NEWS

ILLINOIS SECRETARY OF STATE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

- **May 21, 2001**
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**Secretary White Urges Parents to Buckle Up Their Kids
During Buckle Up America Week**

SPRINGFIELD — Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White reminds parents and children to wear their safety belts during Buckle Up America week from May 21st through the 28th.

"Be smart and always use your safety belt," White said. Let's be sure that not only during this week before Memorial Day, but everyday, we buckle up- to save lives on our roadways."

Research shows that if a driver is not wearing a safety belt, 70 percent of the time children in the vehicle won't be buckled either.

Nationally, traffic crashes are the leading cause of death and injury to children from newborns to age 15. According to the Federal Accident Research Study, 47 percent of children killed between the ages of four and seven are completely unrestrained.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reports that seat belt usage has increased from 15 percent in the 1980s to 71 percent today. Safety seat use for children from birth to one year is 97 percent. However, 85 percent of children are improperly restrained.

Illinois state law requires:

- All drivers and front seat passengers to wear safety belts
- All back seat passengers under age 18 must wear

safety belts

- Four and five year olds must be secured in a safety seat or with a safety belt whichever is appropriate for their size and weight
- Children under age four must be secured in a federally approved safety restraint system Parents should never place rear-facing child safety seats in the front passenger seat unless the passenger airbag has been shut off, White said. Also, infants should remain in rear-facing child safety seats until they are one year old and 20 pounds.

Beginning in June, Secretary White will announce the opening of his second Child Passenger Safety Seat Fitting Station as part of his statewide "Kids In Safe Seats" (KISS) program. The first fitting station is in Springfield and second will be opening in the Chicago area.

For more information on child safety seats, either visit the web site at www.cyberdriveillinois.com and go to the Driver Services Department page or call the Child Safety hotline at 866-247-0213.