Jesse White
SECRETARY OF STATE
NEWS

ILLINOIS SECRETARY OF STATE

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CONTACT: Dave Druker
CONTACT: Elizabeth Kaufman

Secretary White Urges Drivers To Use Their Safety Belts During Buckle Up America Week: May 19-26

SPRINGFIELD — Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White is reminding drivers to use their safety belts and be sure children are properly restrained during Buckle Up America week from May 19th through the 26th.

"Safety belts save lives," White said. "Keeping our roads safe means that we buckle up everyday, not just this week."

Safety belts and child restraints saved more than 13,274 lives of people over the age of four in 2001, according the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

NHTSA reports that seat belt usage has increased from 58 percent in the 1994 to 75 percent in 2002. However, of the 31,910 vehicle occupants killed in crashes in 2001, 60 percent were not wearing safety belts. In addition, 100,892 drivers were convicted of not wearing their safety belts in Illinois in 2001 and 1,414 lives were lost in crash fatalities.

Illinois state law requires:

- All drivers and front seat passengers to wear safety belts
- All back seat passengers under age 18 to wear safety belts
- Children between four and 16 years of age to be secured in either a child safety seat or safety belt
- Children under age four to 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 of age and 20 pounds. The safest place for children under 12 years of age is in the back seat. Under Secretary White's administration, five Child Passenger Safety Seat Fitting Stations have been opened to ensure safety seats are installed properly.

The fitting stations are part of his statewide "Kids In Safe Seats" (KISS) program. They include stations in Springfield, Moline/Silvis, Macomb, Niles, and Chicago.

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