



# Jesse White

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## SECRETARY OF STATE

# NEWS

**For Immediate Release:**  
May 24, 2006

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### **Secretary White Urges Drivers To Wear Safety Belts As Memorial Day Approaches** *Secretary Of State Police Will Be Patrolling Illinois Roads For DUI, Safety Belt and Speeding Violations*

Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White is reminding drivers to use their safety belts and be sure children are properly restrained. Last year, 15 people were killed on Illinois roadways during the Memorial Day weekend. Forty percent of those crash fatalities were alcohol-related.

“Keeping our roads safe means that we wear our safety belts everyday and make sure our children are properly buckled,” White said. “We also want everyone to celebrate safely this holiday weekend. Remember that it is against the law to drink and drive and that your best defense against a drunk driver is your safety belt.”

White said the Secretary of State Police are joining with more than 12,000 other state and local law enforcement officials in the national Click It or Ticket mobilization from May 22<sup>nd</sup> through June 4<sup>th</sup>. The Secretary of State Police will focus on DUI, safety belt and speeding violations.

Regular safety belt use is the single most effective way to protect people and reduce fatalities in motor vehicle crashes, yet nearly one in five Americans still fail to regularly wear their safety belts. When worn correctly safety belts have proven to reduce the risk of fatal injury to front-seat passenger car occupants by 45 percent – and by 60 percent in pickup trucks, SUVs and mini-vans.

According the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), young males, pickup truck occupants, rural drivers and nighttime drivers are the least likely to buckle up and are at the greatest risk:

- 31,693 passenger vehicle occupants died in traffic crashes during 2004 – and 55 percent of those killed were not wearing their safety belts at the time of the crash.
- Men – especially younger men – are much less likely to buckle up. In 2004, 67 percent of male drivers and 73 percent of male passengers between the ages of 18 and 34 who were killed in crashes were not wearing their safety belts.
- In 2005, the observed safety belt use rate in pickup trucks was only 73 percent compared to 83 percent in passenger cars and 85 percent in vans and SUVs.
- In 2004, 68 percent of pickup truck drivers and 73 percent of pickup truck passengers who were killed in traffic crashes were not buckled up.
- While only about a fifth of Americans live in rural areas, rural traffic fatalities accounted for 58 percent of the Nation’s total in 2004.

Illinois state laws require all drivers and front seat passengers to wear safety belts and children under age eight to be secured in an appropriate child restraint system.

White opened Child Passenger Safety Seat Fitting Stations in Springfield, Macomb, Niles, and Chicago to help parents ensure safety seats are installed properly. For more information on child safety seats or to make an appointment to have your seat checked by a technician, visit [www.cyberdriveillinois.com](http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com) or call the toll-free Traffic Safety hotline at 866-247-0213.