

# American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™



## Wisconsin Chapter

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Via Email

August 31, 2015

Representative Tod Ohnstad  
Senator Julie Lassa

### *Support for Assembly Bill 308*

Dear Representative Ohnstad and Senator Lassa,

On behalf of the Wisconsin Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, I am writing to communicate strong support for AB 308, which would exempt a bystander from civil liability for forcibly entering a vehicle to rescue a child or pet.

Last year in the United States 37 children died of heat stroke from being left inside or trapped inside a motor vehicle on a warm day. Since 1990 that total is well over 700. Eight-seven percent of these children were age 3 and younger.

Because of the greenhouse effect, the inside of a vehicle can heat up very quickly in any season. Even with the windows cracked open the temperature inside a car can reach 125 degrees within a few minutes. In fact, cracking the window open neither slows the heating process nor decreases the maximum temperature. Eighty percent of the increase in temperature happens in the first 10 minutes. Children have died from heatstroke in locked vehicles when outside temperatures have been as low as 60 degrees. A child's body will overheat 3 to 5 times faster than an adult body. The smaller the child, the faster the overheating.

There are many reasons that the responsible adult might forget about the child when the adult exits the vehicle. Children often fall asleep during travel, and are often sleeping silently upon reaching the destination. Because safest practice is for children under age 2 to ride rear-facing in the back seat of the car, they are not visible to the driver in the rear-view mirror. All these factors, along with parental stress, fatigue, lack of sleep, and distractions, are contributing factors to this important problem.

AB 308 removes a potential barrier to rescue of a child left behind or trapped in a hot vehicle. By allowing a bystander to attempt to rescue the child without fear of civil liability, we give the child a chance for survival. For this reason the state's pediatricians wholeheartedly support this measure.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you need further information, or to discuss any other child health issues.

Sincerely yours,

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS  
Wisconsin Chapter

 MD FAAP

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