

House Bill 279

By: Representatives Powell of the 29<sup>th</sup>, Rice of the 51<sup>st</sup>, Meadows of the 5<sup>th</sup>, Cooper of the 41<sup>st</sup>, Abrams of the 84<sup>th</sup>, and others

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT

To amend Chapter 8 of Title 40 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to equipment and inspection of motor vehicles, so as to increase age requirements for use of child restraint systems; to provide for related matters; to provide for an effective date; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

**SECTION 1.**

Chapter 8 of Title 40 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to equipment and inspection of motor vehicles, is amended by revising of subsections (b) and (d) of Code Section 40-8-76, relating to safety belts and child restraint systems, as follows:

"(b)(1) Every driver who transports a child under ~~six~~ eight years of age in a passenger automobile, van, or pickup truck, other than a taxicab as defined by Code Section 33-34-5.1 or a public transit vehicle as defined by Code Section 16-5-20, shall, while such motor vehicle is in motion and operated on a public road, street, or highway of this state, provide for the proper restraint of such child in a child passenger restraining system appropriate for such child's height and weight and approved by the United States Department of Transportation under provisions of Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard 213 in effect on January 1, 1983, or at the time of manufacture, subject to the following specific requirements and exceptions:

(A) Any such child weighing at least 40 pounds may be secured by a lap belt when:

(i) The vehicle is not equipped with both lap and shoulder belts; or

(ii) Not including the driver's seat, the vehicle is equipped with one or more lap and shoulder belts that are all being used to properly restrain other children;

(B) Any such child shall be properly restrained in a rear seat of the motor vehicle consistent with the requirements of this paragraph. If the vehicle has no rear seating position appropriate for correctly restraining a child or all appropriate rear seating

positions are occupied by other children, any such child may be properly restrained in a front seat consistent with the requirements of this paragraph;

(C) A driver shall not be deemed to be complying with the provisions of this paragraph unless any child passenger restraining system required by this paragraph is installed and being used in accordance with the manufacturer's directions for such system; and

(D) The provisions of this paragraph shall not apply when the child's parent or guardian either obtains a physician's written statement that a physical or medical condition of the child prevents placing or restraining him or her in the manner required by this paragraph. If the parent or guardian can show the child's height is over 4 feet and 9 inches, such child shall be restrained in a safety belt as required in Code Section 40-8-76.1.

(2) Upon a first conviction of an offense under this subsection, the defendant shall be punished by a fine of not more than \$50.00, except in the case of a child who is ~~five~~ six or seven years of age, if the defendant shows to the court having jurisdiction of the case that a child passenger restraining system meeting the applicable requirements of this subsection has been purchased by him or her after the time of the offense and prior to the court appearance, the court may waive or suspend the fine for such first conviction. This exception shall apply until January 1, ~~2005~~ 2012. Upon a second or subsequent conviction of an offense under this subsection, the defendant shall be punished by a fine of not more than \$100.00. No court shall impose any additional fees or surcharges to a fine for such a violation. The court imposing a fine for any violation of this Code section shall forward a record of the disposition of the cases annually to the Department of ~~Public Safety~~ Driver Services for the sole purpose of data collection on a county by county basis."

"(d) The provisions of this Code section shall not apply to buses, as defined in paragraph (7) of Code Section 40-1-1, used in the transport of children over four years of age until July 1, ~~2007~~ 2012, provided that the bus is operated by a licensed or commissioned child care facility, has a current annual transportation safety inspection certificate as required by the appropriate licensing body, and has evidence of being inspected for use by a child care facility. If the bus is not a school bus, as defined in paragraph (55) of Code Section 40-1-1, or a multifunction school activities bus, as defined in 49 C.F.R. 571.3(B), each child over four years of age and under ~~six~~ eight years of age shall be properly restrained by a ~~safety belt~~ child passenger restraining system. Multifunction school activities buses, as defined in 49 C.F.R. 571.3(B), shall not be required to transport children five years of age or older in a child passenger restraining system."

**SECTION 2.**

Said chapter is further amended by revising paragraph (3) of subsection (e) of Code Section 40-8-76.1, relating to use of safety belts in passenger vehicles, as follows:

"(3) Each minor ~~six~~ eight years of age or older who is an occupant of a passenger vehicle shall, while such passenger vehicle is being operated on a public road, street, or highway of this state, be restrained by a seat safety belt approved under Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard 208. In any case where a minor passenger ~~six~~ eight years of age or older fails to comply with the requirements of this paragraph, the driver of the passenger vehicle shall be guilty of the offense of failure to secure a seat safety belt on a minor and, upon conviction thereof, may be fined not more than \$25.00. The court imposing such a fine shall forward a record of the court disposition of the case of failure to secure a seat safety belt on a minor to the Department of Driver Services."

**SECTION 3.**

This Act shall become effective on July 1, 2011.

**SECTION 4.**

All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.