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## FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR: Robinson DATE TYPED: 02/16/01 HB \_\_\_\_\_  
 SHORT TITLE: Require Safety Belt Use SB 499  
 ANALYST: Gonzales

### REVENUE

Estimated Revenue		Subsequent Years Impact	Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY01	FY02			
	See Narrative		Recurring	Motor Vehicle Suspense

(Parenthesis ( ) Indicate Revenue Decreases)

Duplicates/Conflicts with/Companion to/Relates to \_\_\_\_\_

### SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files  
 Department of Public Safety  
 State Highway and Transportation Department

### SUMMARY

#### Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 499 mandates that every passenger in a vehicle weighing 10,000 pounds or less be properly fastened in a seatbelt while the vehicle is in motion on any street or highway.

#### Significant Issues

Current statutes do not require use of safety belts in vehicles weighing 10,000 pounds or less: 1) other than in front seats, and 2) in cases where all seating positions equipped with safety belts are occupied. This bill would remove these restrictions.

### PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

Law enforcement agencies will still continue to enforce the seat belt statute. However the bill would allow a larger enforcement option for officers who find passengers without seat belts.

**FISCAL IMPLICATIONS**

Revenue from penalty assessment citations may increase due to the new seat belt requirements. However, based on current practices, restrictions imposed by the bill do not vary greatly from current practices, hence impacts on revenues would probably be minor, of not insignificant. The Department of Public Safety estimates \$3.0 to \$30.0 in additional revenue.

**OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES**

The State Highway and Transportation Department reports the following:

Increasing rear seat belt use rates to the same level if front seat belt use (87%) will save more lives and lower the number of incapacitating injuries in New Mexico. Based on surveys conducted, New Mexicans support seat belt use laws. Past experience with this law demonstrates that legislation changes behavior. The front seat belt law was passed in 1986. Front seat belt use rates have climbed from 24% in 1985 to 87% in 2000. SB 499's proposed change will further New Mexico's compliance with federal seat belt law criteria, 23 U.S.C. Section 157.

Seat belt use is projected to have saved about 160 lives per year in New Mexico between 1995-2000. Public opinion surveys done in Motor Vehicle offices annually show strong support for current occupant restraint laws (87% in 2000). In a recent observational study in eleven sites around New Mexico, 84% of the participants favored changing NM law to require all passengers to be buckled up. Unrestrained vehicle occupants result in unnecessary death and incapacitating injuries. This will impact all New Mexicans through lost wages, productivity and quality of life and increases medical, administrative, motor vehicle and employer costs.

The annual savings from eliminating these deaths and incapacitating injuries is projected to be approximately \$17.5 million in loss wages and productivity, medical expenses, administrative expenses and motor vehicle and employer costs. If we include quality of life costs, this projection grows to \$59.0 million.

JMG/sb/njw