

STATE OF NEW YORK

753

2021-2022 Regular Sessions

IN ASSEMBLY

(Prefiled)

January 6, 2021

Introduced by M. of A. GALEF, CUSICK, WEPRIN, STECK -- Multi-Sponsored by -- M. of A. COOK, ENGLEBRIGHT, GLICK, GOTTFRIED, HYNDMAN, McDO-NOUGH, NIOU, PAULIN, PERRY -- read once and referred to the Committee on Transportation

AN ACT to amend the vehicle and traffic law, in relation to prohibiting children under the age of eight from riding as a passenger in the front seat of a motor vehicle except under limited circumstances

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. Subdivisions 2, 5, 6 and 7 of section 1229-c of the vehicle
2 and traffic law, subdivision 2 as amended by chapter 18 of the laws of
3 2005, paragraph (c) of subdivision 2 and subdivision 6 as amended by
4 chapter 405 of the laws of 2009, subdivision 5 as amended by chapter 38
5 of the laws of 2020, and subdivision 7 as added by chapter 365 of the
6 laws of 1984, are amended to read as follows:
7 2. No person shall operate a motor vehicle unless all front seat
8 passengers (a) under the age of sixteen are restrained by a safety belt;
9 or (b) if they are under the age of four, by a specially designed seat
10 which is either permanently affixed or affixed to such vehicle by a
11 safety belt as required by subdivision one of this section, or in the
12 event that the weight of such passenger under the age of four exceeds
13 forty pounds, such passenger may be restrained (i) in an appropriate
14 child restraint system as defined in subdivision four of this section
15 used with combination lap safety and shoulder harness belts or (ii) by a
16 lap safety belt in the event such vehicle is not equipped with combina-
17 tion lap safety and shoulder harness belts or all the combination lap
18 safety and shoulder harness belts are being used to properly restrain
19 other passengers who are under the age of sixteen; or (c) if they are
20 age four or older but under age eight, (i) are restrained in an appro-
21 priate child restraint system as defined in subdivision four of this

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[-] is old law to be omitted.

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1 section used with combination lap safety and shoulder harness belts or
2 (ii) are restrained in a lap safety belt in the event such vehicle is
3 not equipped with combination lap safety and shoulder harness belts or
4 all the combination lap safety and shoulder harness belts are being used
5 to properly restrain other passengers who are under the age of sixteen.

6 Nothing contained in this subdivision shall be deemed to supersede the
7 requirements of subdivision two-a of this section.

8 5. Any person who violates the provisions of subdivision three,
9 three-c or ten-a of this section shall be punished by a civil fine of up
10 to fifty dollars. Any person who violates the provisions of subdivision
11 one, two, two-a, eleven or thirteen of this section shall be punished by
12 a civil fine of not less than twenty-five nor more than one hundred
13 dollars. In any prosecution or proceeding alleging a violation of para-
14 graph (b) of subdivision one or paragraph (c) of subdivision two of this
15 section, it shall be an affirmative defense that the passenger subject
16 to the requirements of such paragraphs was restrained by a safety belt
17 and measures more than four feet nine inches in height and/or weighs
18 more than one hundred pounds. In any prosecution or proceeding alleging
19 a violation of paragraph (b) or paragraph (c) of subdivision three-c of
20 this section, it shall be an affirmative defense that such taxi or
21 livery was in violation of subdivision four-b of section three hundred
22 eighty-three of this chapter.

23 6. The court shall waive any fine for which a person who violates the
24 provisions of this section would be liable with respect to passengers
25 under the age of eight if such person supplies the court with proof
26 that, between the date on which he is charged with having violated this
27 section and the appearance date for such violation, he purchased or
28 rented a child restraint system which meets the requirements of subdivi-
29 sion one of this section. Provided, however, that such waiver of fine
30 shall not apply to a second or subsequent conviction under this section,
31 nor a violation of subdivision two-a of this section.

32 7. The provisions of this section shall not apply to a passenger or
33 operator with a physically disabling condition whose physical disability
34 would prevent appropriate restraint in such safety seat or safety belt,
35 or to a passenger under the age of eight whose physical condition neces-
36 sitates that such passenger be seated in the front seat for medical or
37 safety reasons, provided, however, that such condition is duly certified
38 by a physician who shall state the nature of the [~~handicap~~] disability
39 or condition, as well as the reason such restraint is or rear seat
40 placement is inappropriate.

41 § 2. Section 1229-c of the vehicle and traffic law is amended by
42 adding a new subdivision 2-a to read as follows:

43 2-a. No person shall operate a motor vehicle with any passengers under
44 the age of eight seated in the front seat of such vehicle. Provided,
45 however, that such prohibition shall not apply if: (a) such motor vehi-
46 cle is not equipped with rear seats; or (b) the rear seat cannot accom-
47 modate the proper installation of the child safety seat or booster seat
48 in which such passenger is being transported, as determined by the
49 commissioner, or vehicle manufacturer, or child safety seat or booster
50 seat manufacturer; or (c) all other seat positions are occupied by other
51 occupants who are under the age of eight; or (d) such passenger under
52 the age of eight is exempt pursuant to the provisions of subdivision
53 seven of this section.

54 § 3. This act shall take effect on the first of January next succeed-
55 ing the date on which it shall have become a law; provided that any
56 person who violates the provisions of subdivision 2-a of section 1229-c

1 of the vehicle and traffic law, as added by section two of this act
2 within the twelve months following such effective date, shall be subject
3 to a warning but shall not be issued an appearance ticket and shall not
4 be liable for a fine.