

Child restraint law reduces casualties

Michigan's five-year-old child restraint law has dramatically reduced traffic fatalities and injuries to infants under age 1, reports AAA Michigan.

Michigan State Police figures show that when 1981 and 1985 are compared — which are the years prior to the restraint law and the last year for which statistics are available — injuries and deaths for under 1-year-olds declined 97 percent.

The record also shows a steady annual decline from 328 casualties in 1981 to 201 in 1982, 174 in 1983, 71 in 1984 and 11 in 1985.

"The law has increased child restraint use from 12 percent in 1981 to 53 percent for 1985," said AAA Michigan Safety and Traffic Manager Robert Cullen. "The drop in casualties has occurred despite a 10 percent increase in state mileage from 1981 to 1985."

Michigan's child restraint law requires infants under age 1 to be fastened in an approved child restraint and those ages 1-3 to ride in an approved safety seat while in the front and to use either a safety seat or belt in the back seat.

Despite the drop in infant casualties, injuries and deaths for children ages 1 through 3 rose from 1,880 in 1981 to 1,893 in 1985, an increase of less than 1 percent.

"THERE IS no evidence available to explain the difference in statistics between the two age groups except that parents might

be taking more safety precautions with babies," Cullen said.

Cullen added that although 92 percent of infants under age 1 and 55 percent of children ages 1-3 observed in a University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute study were riding in a safety seat, about 62 percent of the seats were used incorrectly.

"Tests have proven that child restraints will not perform satisfactorily and can fail if not used properly," he pointed out. "In addition, children generally are better behaved and less likely to distract the driver if restrained."

AAA Michigan offers the following recommendations for child restraints:

- Use only restraints that meet strict federal safety standards, identified by a seal on the box or a label on the restraint.

- Fasten the harness and make sure all straps fit snugly, even if the trip is to be a short one.

- Fasten the vehicle's safety belt through the restraint in the position recommended by the manufacturer.

- Place the device in the middle of the back seat for the best protection.

- Place infant seats so that the child is always facing rearward.

A list of approved child seats and copy of "Fragile . . . Transport Safely" are available free of charge by writing the Safety and Traffic Department, AAA Michigan, 17000 Executive Plaza Drive Dearborn 48126.

2 vie for seat on school board

Continued from Page 1

develop more community involvement, she said.

FINDING A means to evaluate changes in the district and the new administration — is "key," Rennels said.

Challenger Mart is a kindergarten teacher in the Birmingham school district, and has a second grader at Wood Creek Elementary. An 8-year resident of Farmington Hills, she is running because she wants the school district to be "much better than adequate."

Mart has thought about running for the board since her child entered the school system two years ago. "I was somewhat disappointed with the programming in the school," she said. "I decided to do something about it. I'm a real believer in public education, and I'm not sure we're utilizing all our resources."

The biggest challenge facing the district is getting the parents and taxpayers involved with the district, according to Mart. "Our input is very important," she added.

Rennels also advocates a strong parent and community group. She heads up the board's community relations committee.

ANOTHER MAJOR challenge for the district, according to Rennels, is

how the district will address the issue of increased population, which includes the probability of a new elementary school and use changes in other schools, she said. "A lot of it (the changes) will be put in motion in the next 6-9 months," she added.

Assistant vice president for First Federal of Michigan, Rennels holds the position of branch manager at the company's West Bloomfield office. Both her son and daughter attended Farmington Public Schools.

As a trustee, Rennels is active in Farmington Youth Assistance and is a liaison to the Farmington Hills

City Council, a relationship she said is important. She is also a member of the Farmington Business and Professional Women, the League of Women Voters, and several other organizations. She said she makes an effort to attend school functions — especially special activities at each school.

Mart is active in the Wood Creek PTO and sits on a committee in the Birmingham schools responsible for rewriting the kindergarten curriculum. She has also been active in the OM Competition in Farmington schools.

OTHER FARMINGTON board members continuing in staggered, four-year terms are Helen Prutow, Janice Rolnick, and R. Jack Inch, all serving their third terms; James Abernethy, John Cotton and Helen Ditzhazy are serving their first term. All the school board seats are held for four-year terms.

Farmington Public Schools encompasses most of Farmington, Farmington Hills and a portion of West Bloomfield Township a half mile north of 14 Mile between Inkster and Middlebelt roads.

Four seek C'ville seats

Four candidates will vie for two seats on the Clarenceville Board of Education in the Monday, June 8, district election.

Current seat holders are Barry Sherman, who will seek re-election, and Samuel Prisk, who will not. Clarenceville includes northeastern Livonia and portions of Redford Township and Farmington Hills.

Prisk, a self-employed dentist who works in Redford Township, will

give up his seat on the board after 27 years. He decided not to run again to open up the race for other candidates. He has been active in scouting for 40 years.

Sherman, a Livonia police officer, was the youngest person ever elected to the Clarenceville school board when, at age 25, he was successful in a bid for a two-year term in 1977. He will be seeking his third four-year term.

Challenging Sherman will be new-

comers Vernice Dunklee and Sharon Pommerville of Livonia and Timothy Wiggle of Redford Township.

The candidates had to file nominating petitions with the signatures of at least 20 registered district voters. They have until 4 p.m. today to withdraw from the non-partisan election. The winners will take office July 1.

Residents have until Monday, May 11, to register to vote in the June election.

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