

Lawmakers consider banning smoking in cars with kids

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[Mark Davis](#)

HARTFORD, Conn. (WTNH) -- Should Connecticut ban smoking in cars that contain small children? That's the question state lawmakers will take up later this week in the powerful Transportation Committee.

For nearly eight years, Connecticut law has required all kids under age 7 and under 60 pounds to ride in a strapped down child restraint seat. Infants under one year of age and under 20 pounds must be rear facing in their car seats.

Now state lawmakers are considering adding a ban on smoking in all vehicles containing children in car seats. State Representative Henry Genga of East Hartford has been pushing for this since 2008, and says the overwhelming medical research favors it.

"Until they're age 7, their immunity systems are not mature," Genga said, "so they require a lot more air than you and I would, multiple times more."

And Genga says that the research debunks the theory that all you have to do is crack some of the windows to make it safe.

"The second hand smoke, with the windows cracked, is greater than the smokey bars that we ban today," Genga said.

Police say it wouldn't be that difficult to enforce as a tandem part of the child restraint law. One mom News 8 spoke with Monday thinks it would be a good education tool.

"I think it would help to raise awareness on the impact that this has on some kids and I think that there's tremendous value in that," LISS said, "and so I would love to see it make some sort of a difference." And for those that think this is too much interference in personal lives, Genga says it would just be another driving regulation.

"Seat belts, cell phones, child restraint seats and children wearing helmets," Genga said, "this just makes sense, it's common sense, it's the right thing to do."

For first time offenders there would be no fine, just a warning from police. On Wednesday, the legislature's Transportation Committee will take up this proposal for the first time.

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