HB 2643 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Early Childhood and Family Supports

Prepared By:	Zena Rockowitz, LPRO Analyst
Meeting Dates:	2/14, 3/9

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Requires children under age two to be properly secured with a child safety system in a rear-facing position.

FISCAL: *Minimal fiscal impact, but no statement issued*

REVENUE: *No revenue impact.*

ISSUES DISCUSSED:
- Protection of child's head, neck, and spine provided by rear-facing car seats
- Distinction between rear-facing and forward-facing car seats
- Aligning law with changes in evidence-based best practices
- Motor vehicle crashes leading cause of injury for children under age one
- Time and education needed for parents and caregivers to adjust to new law

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

(-1) Removes 20 pound weight requirement.

FISCAL: *Minimal fiscal impact, but no statement issued*

REVENUE: *No revenue impact.*

(-4) Removes 20 pound weight requirement. Creates operative date of January 1, 2019.

FISCAL: *Minimal fiscal impact, but no statement issued*

REVENUE: *No revenue impact.*

BACKGROUND:

Current law requires children under age one, or a child weighing 20 pounds or less to be in a rear-facing position in a car seat. A 2007 study in the Injury Prevention Journal analyzed the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's vehicle crash data for 870 children and found that rear facing seats were more effective than forward facing seats in protecting children aged 0-23 months for all crash types. In 2011, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) issued a recommendation that all infants and toddlers should ride in a rear-facing car seat until age two or until they reach the height or weight limit of the car seat's manufacturer. Current available car seats accommodate these recommendations. AAP reports that infants younger than age two have relatively large heads and structural features of their neck and spine that place them at particularly high risk of injuries in crashes. Rear facing car seats support the neck and spine if a crash occurs.