Child Restraint Bill Cleared

By Advertiser Capitol Bureau

BATON ROUGE — New Iberia Rep. Ted Haik’s bill to require child restraints for auto passengers under age 5 is on its way to the Senate floor after being approved by a committee yesterday.

The measure will require that all children under 5 be strapped into a federally approved restraint system when transported on city streets or highways. Children age 3 to 5 could utilize the vehicle’s rear seat belts but children under age 3 must use child seats because seat belts are hazardous for them.

Haik has had the support of numerous safety associations and pediatricians in promoting the bill, which he says will reduce deaths and injuries to young children.

Almost 3,000 children were seriously injured in Louisiana last year and another 21 were killed in car wrecks, Haik said, and many of these could have been avoided if child seats were used.

The bill will call for the issuance of warning tickets for first offenders. After that, a fine of $25 to $50 per child would be levied but it could be dropped if proof is shown that the defendant has acquired a safety seat.

Louisiana, Texas, Wyoming and Alaska are the only states that do not require child restraints.