

A close-up photograph of a seatbelt buckle and strap. The buckle is black plastic with a red release button. The strap is grey fabric with a woven texture. The background is dark and out of focus.

**Working on
a
current bill:
Primary Seatbelt Law**

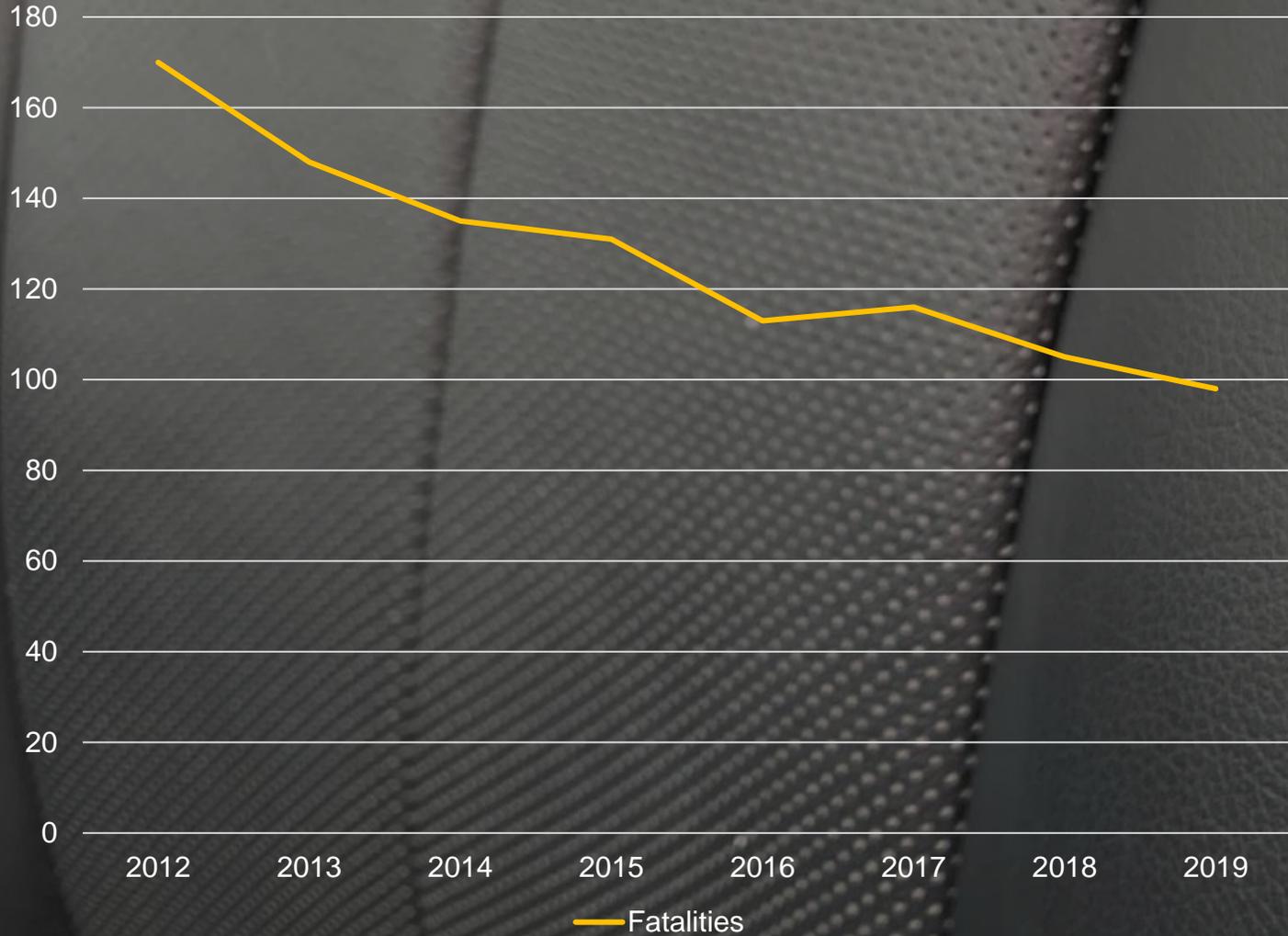
Ryan Gellner

VISION ZERO 

Zero fatalities. Zero excuses.

North Dakota Seat Belt Data

Traffic Fatalities in North Dakota
2012-2019



North Dakota Seat Belt Data

- Unbelted Motor Vehicle Fatalities

Year	Fatalities *	No Seat belt Used	Percent Unbelted
2014	110	76	69 %
2015	111	68	61 %
2016	87	51	59 %
2017	91	50	55 %
2018	77	37	48 %
2019 #	74	35	47%

*Includes fatalities where seat belts were available within the vehicle. Excludes where seat belts do not apply (pedestrian, motorcycle, bicycles, etc)

Preliminary Data from 2019



Why Pursue Primary Seatbelts?

- Primary Seatbelt is an **evidence-based** strategy
 - Identified in the North Dakota *Vision Zero* Plan as a priority strategy for implementation because it will have **immediate and significant impact** on **reducing motor vehicle crash deaths and serious injuries** in North Dakota.
- The **number one** contributing factor in motor vehicle crash deaths in North Dakota is **not wearing a seatbelt**.
- Unbelted motor vehicle crash deaths **are preventable**. To prevent unbelted motor vehicle deaths, everybody needs to **wear a seatbelt**, every trip, every time.



Current Secondary Seatbelt Law

North Dakota Code 39-21-41.4

All front seat occupants must wear a properly adjusted and fastened seatbelt. (Secondary Enforcement).

All occupants younger than 18 must be properly restrained regardless of the occupant's location in the vehicle (Primary Enforcement).



Proposed Primary Seatbelt Law

A close-up photograph of a car seatbelt buckle and strap. The buckle is silver metal with a black plastic cover. The strap is black fabric with a white woven pattern. The background is a dark, textured car seat.

All occupants must wear a properly adjusted and fastened seatbelt. (Primary Enforcement).

All occupants younger than 18 must be properly restrained regardless of the occupant's location in the vehicle (Primary Enforcement).

Recent Legislative History

FAILED:

2003 – SB 2189 (Primary Enforcement) – Failed 16-30

2005 – SB 2380 (Primary Enforcement) – Failed 8-36

2007 – HB 1254 (Primary Enforcement) – Failed 40-52

2009 - HB 1197 (Primary Enforcement) - Failed 34-58

2013 - HB 1335 (Primary Enforcement) – Failed 40-52

2019 – SB 2060 (Primary Enforcement) – Passed 24-23

- Failed 38-54

2018 Legislative Recap



What Happened in 2018:

SB 2060 (Making seatbelt violations a primary enforcement and provide a penalty.)

Result:

Senate Committee: No Recommendation (6-0)
Tied Senate (23-23)

Reconsidered in Senate

Amendment proposed on Floor, which failed
Passed Senate (24-23)

House Committee: Do Not Pass (9-4-1)
Failed House: 54-38

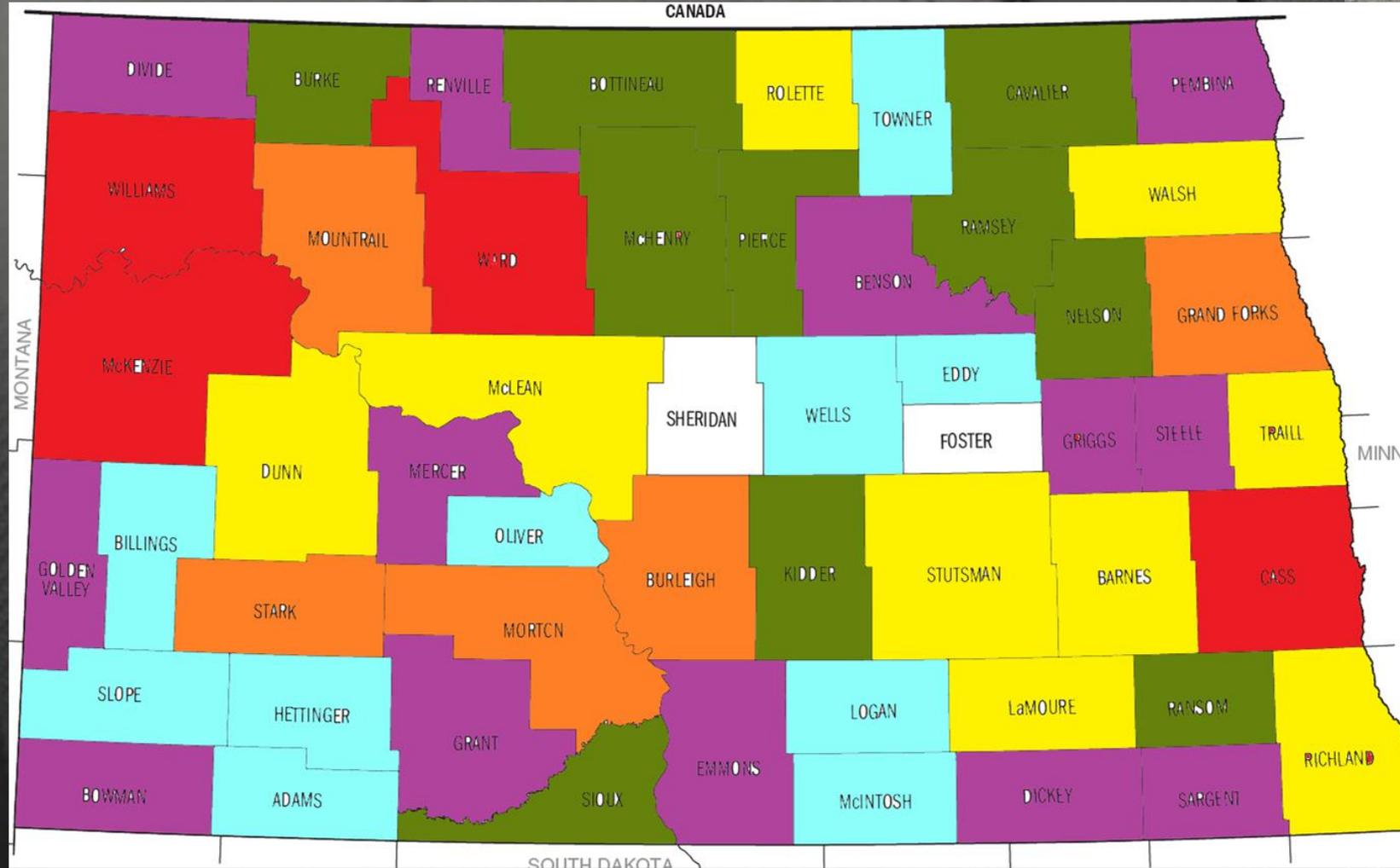
Recent Legislative History

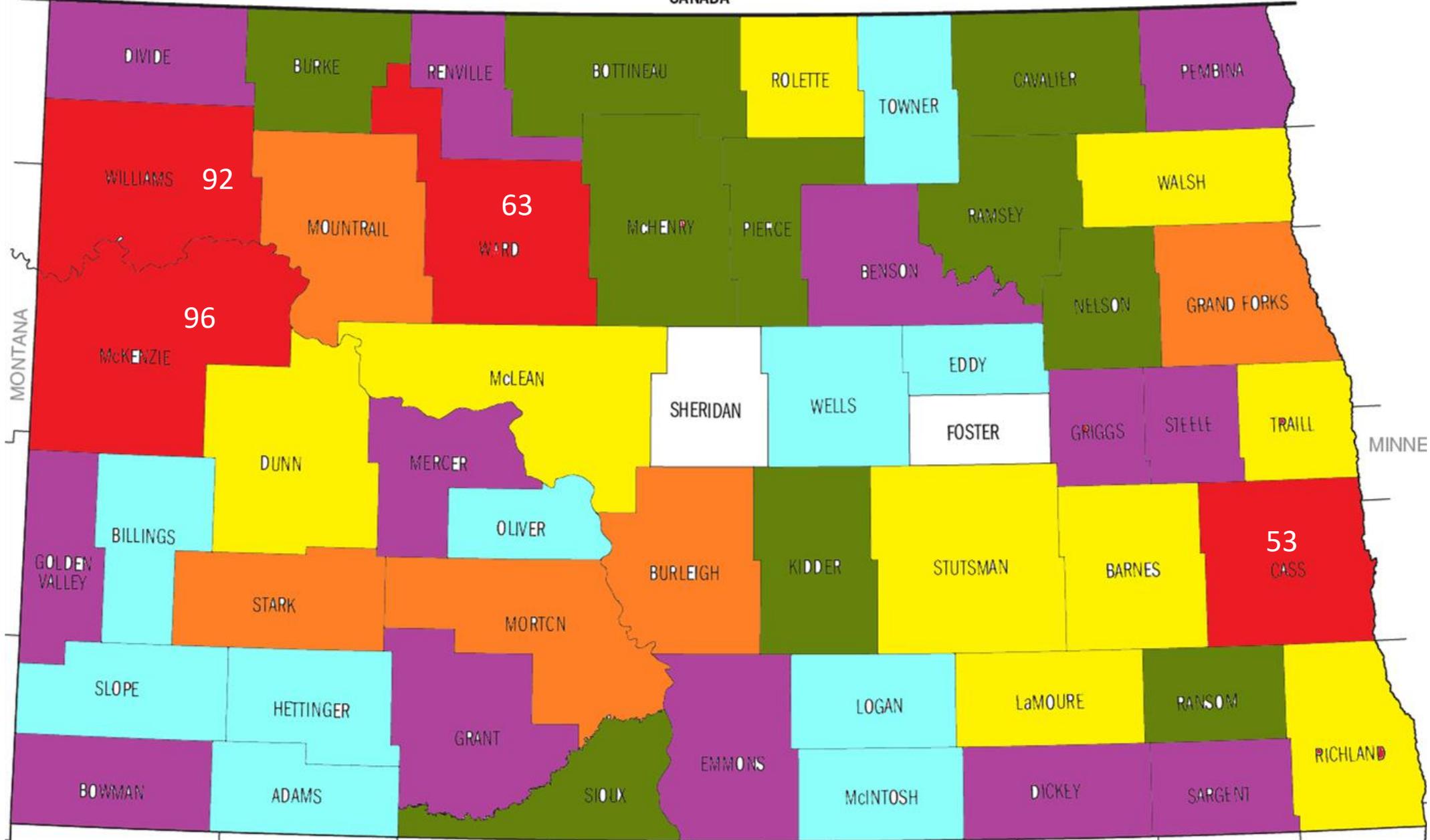
- Why won't the bill pass?
 - “Freedom of Choice” vs. “Government Creating Laws”
 - “It’s my decision if I die in a crash wearing my belt or not”
 - “Next, we’ll be asking people to paint their houses white”
 - “It’s good for business” (Legislator, Funeral Director)
 - “People in my district have not told me they want this law”



2013-2017

Unbelted Severe and Fatal Crashes





51-96

31-50

15-30

10-14

5-9

1-4

0

North Dakota Seat Belt Data

- Annual Seat belt Survey in 2018 shows 82.5% wear Seat belt.
 - National Average is 89.6 %
- Every 6 Days one unbelted vehicle occupant is ejected.
- Every 10 Days one unbelted vehicle occupant dies.

Statewide Survey

- 58 % Favor a Primary seatbelt law (NDDOT, 2018)
- 54 % Favor a Primary seatbelt law (NDACo, 2018)



Putting Plan into Motion



- What has worked? What has not worked?
- Forming a Committee
 - 39 members
- Finding Partners
- Following Elections
- Contacting Legislators
 - Finding Legislative Support
 - Bill Sponsors
 - Influencers
- Community Support
- Advocating to Update the Law
 - Phone Calls, Emails, Letters
 - Testimony
 - Talking to Legislators

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Ryan Gellner
Vision Zero Outreach Program

North Dakota
Association of Counties