



Wisconsin Chapter

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Wisconsin Pediatricians Oppose AB504/SB 381

Relating to the age restriction for operation of a small utility terrain vehicle

On behalf of the Wisconsin Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (WIAAP), I am writing to express opposition to AB504/SB 381, which would allow children under age 12 to ride large All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) on Wisconsin state trails, and would allow children between 12 and 16 to drive small Utility Terrain Vehicles (UTVs) on state trails as long as they have adult supervision and a valid safety certificate.

ATVs are dangerous vehicles. Nationally, at least 650 ATV-related fatalities occurred in 2012. In 2013, ATVs killed at least 62 children younger than 16, including three children from Wisconsin. Nationally, over 40% of children killed in ATV mishaps were under age 12. In 2013 there were nearly 100,000 serious ATV injuries requiring emergency room treatment, including 25,000 under age 16 and 13,100 under age 12.

UTVs are perceived to be "safer," primarily because they have rollover protection bars. However, they are larger vehicles with larger and more powerful engines, and are capable of higher speeds. Currently the CPSC statistics lump together ATV and UTV injury data, and there are only limited data to support the claim that these vehicles are safer for children to drive.

Additionally, children younger than 16 years may have immature judgment and motor skills. This developmental issue places them at much greater risk of driver error. Additionally, they may lack the strength necessary to safely operate an ATV or UTV. If such children are not licensed to drive a car, they should not be allowed to operate off-road vehicles either.

The Wisconsin Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, in accordance with the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics, advocates for laws that:

- prohibit the use of ATVs (including UTVs), on- or off-road, by children and adolescents younger than 16 years;
- require an automobile drivers' license, and preferably some additional certification in ATV/UTV use;
- prohibit the use of ATVs/UTVs on public streets and highways;
- prohibit passengers from riding on ATVs;
- prohibit operating an ATV/UTV under the influence of alcohol; and
- prohibit the use of ATVs/UTVs between sundown and sunrise.

WIAAP believes that AB504/SB381 is a step backwards from these goals, and that it is inappropriate to put the business interests of tourism ahead of the health and safety of Wisconsin's children. For these reasons we strongly urge you to vote against this bill.

Sincerely yours,

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS
Wisconsin Chapter

Handwritten signature of Jeffrey W. Britton, MD, FAAP. The signature is written in black ink and includes the text "Jeffrey W. Britton MD FAAP".

Jeffrey W. Britton, MD, FAAP
President