

**The Meharry-State Farm
Alliance
2010 SEAT BELT
CHAMPION AWARDS**



**of
Wisconsin**

Previous recipients
[Word document](#)

Legislators' bios and
hi-res images

Press release
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**Meharry-State Farm Alliance recognizes Wisconsin
legislators for seat belt law**

(NASHVILLE, Tenn.) April 15, 2010—The Meharry-State Farm Alliance presented Seat Belt Champion Awards today to Wisconsin legislators who were instrumental in passage of the state's primary seat belt law. They were Senator Fred Risser of Senate District 26, Representative Jason M. Fields of Assembly District 11, and Representative Garey Bies of Assembly District 1. The Executive Award was presented to Governor Jim Doyle, which was accepted by Wisconsin State Patrol Superintendent David Collins.



Sen. Fred Risser

The awards were presented April 15 at the Monona Terrace Community and Convention Center in Madison, Wis. Officials from the transportation and safety industry attended the presentation made by Meharry Medical College and State Farm®.

"These lawmakers overcame tall barriers in order to pass the primary enforcement law, and now thousands of deaths and injuries will be prevented," said Osei Mevs, Senior Associate Vice President for External Affairs, Meharry Medical College. "Their endeavors were exemplary and are a textbook example for lawmakers in other states to follow who are laboring to enact primary seat belt legislation."

Elizabeth Tharp, Vice President of Agency-Wisconsin for State Farm, agreed.

"State Farm has a longstanding commitment to making our roads safer. By supporting effective safety legislation, State Farm plays an important role in raising public awareness of these issues," she said.

Wisconsin previously had a secondary law requiring drivers to buckle their seat belts but officers were unable to ticket offenders unless they had been stopped for another driving violation. As of June 30, 2009, motorists can be stopped and ticketed solely for not wearing their seat belts.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, as reported by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, has estimated Wisconsin's new law will save the state 44 lives, prevent 650 injuries, and save \$147 million a year.

The Meharry-State Farm Alliance was formed in 2002 by Meharry Medical College and State Farm Insurance to reduce disparities among minorities in seat belt use and traffic deaths and injuries. Primary seat belt legislation has been shown to increase seat belt use among all drivers by 10-15 percent, and use of seat belts has been shown to reduce the risk of death and injury by 50 percent.

The Seat Belt Champion Award is presented to legislators who sponsor seat belt legislation, often in the face of prolonged opposition. Previous recipients include President Barack Obama for his role in the passage of Illinois's law while a state senator.

About Meharry Medical College

Meharry Medical College is the nation's largest private, independent, historically black academic health center dedicated solely to educating minority and other health professionals. True to its heritage, it is a United Methodist Church affiliated institution. The College is particularly well known for its uniquely nurturing, highly effective educational programs; emerging preeminence in health disparities research; culturally sensitive, evidence-based health services; and significant contribution to the diversity of the nation's health professions workforce. Diverse Issues in Higher



Rep. Jason M. Fields



Sen. Garey Bies

Education's ranking of institutions annually lists Meharry as a leading national educator of African Americans with M.D. and D.D.S. degrees, and Ph.D. degrees in the biomedical sciences.

About State Farm

State Farm® insures more cars and homes than any other insurer in the U.S., is the leading insurer of watercraft and is also a leading insurer in Canada. State Farm's 17,000 agents and 67,000 employees serve over 77 million auto, fire, life and health policies in the United States and Canada, and more than 1.9 million bank accounts. State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Company is the parent of the State Farm family of companies. State Farm is ranked No. 32 on the Fortune 500 list of largest companies. For more information, please visit statefarm.com or in Canada statefarm.ca.

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