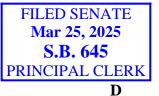
## GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA SESSION 2025



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## SENATE BILL DRS45272-NEa-57

Short Title:	The Protect Our Schools Act.	(Public)
Sponsors:	Senators Everitt, Bradley, and Grafstein (Primary Sponsors).	
Referred to:		

1	A BILL TO BE ENTITLED				
2	AN ACT DIRECTING THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TO IDENTIFY				
3	SCHOOL WALK ZONES; SETTING LOWER SPEED LIMITS IN SCHOOL WALK				
4	ZONES; INCREASING CRIMINAL PENALTIES FOR INJURING A MINOR IN A				
5	CROSSWALK, SCHOOL ZONE, OR SCHOOL WALK ZONE; AND CREATING AND				
6	APPROPRIATING FUNDS TO THE PEDESTRIAN SAFETY ENHANCEMENT FUND.				
7	The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:				
8	SECTION 1.(a) This act shall be known as "The Protect Our Schools Act."				
9	<b>SECTION 1.(b)</b> G.S. 20-4.01 reads as rewritten:				
10	"§ 20-4.01. Definitions.				
11	Unless the context requires otherwise, the following definitions apply throughout this				
12	Chapter to the defined words and phrases and their cognates:				
13					
14	(38a) School Walk Zone An area within a school zone, identified by the				
15	Department pursuant to G.S. 20-141.1, that is likely to sustain pedestrian				
16	traffic sufficient to render the speed limits designated in G.S. 20-141 unsafe.				
17					
18	<b>SECTION 1.(c)</b> G.S. 20-141.1 reads as rewritten:				
19	"§ 20-141.1. Speed limits in school <del>zones.zones and school walk zones.</del>				
20	(a) Optional Lower Speed Limits. – The Board of Transportation or local authorities				
21	within their respective jurisdictions may, by ordinance, set speed limits lower than those				
22	designated in G.S. 20-141 for areas adjacent to or near a public, private or parochial school.				
23	(b) Mandatory Lower Speed Limits. – The Department of Transportation shall annually				
24	consult with the governing body of each public school unit and each nonpublic school operating				
25	pursuant to Part 1 or Part 2 of Article 39 of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes to designate				
26	school walk zones. In all designated school walk zones, the Department shall (i) set speed limits				
27	lower than those designated in G.S. 20-141 and (ii) ensure appropriate actions are taken to				
28	effectuate the reduced speed limit.				
29	(c) <u>Implementation Requirements. – Limits set pursuant to this section shall become</u>				
30	effective when signs are erected giving notice of the school zone, or school walk zone, the				
31	authorized speed limit, and the days and hours when the lower limit is effective, or by erecting				
32	signs giving notice of the school zone, or school walk zone, the authorized speed limit and which				
33	indicate the days and hours the lower limit is effective by an electronic flasher operated with a				
34	time clock. Limits set pursuant to this section may be enforced only on days when school is in				

session, and no speed limit below 20 miles per hour may be set under the authority of this section.
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	General A	Asseml	bly Of North Carolina	Session 2025			
	<u>(d)</u>	Penalty. – Unless covered under some other provision of law providing greater					
	punishme	nishment, a person who drives who:					
		<u>(1)</u>	<u>Drives</u> a motor vehicle in a school zone <u>or school walk zo</u> than the speed limit set and posted under this section i infraction and is required to pay a penalty of two h (\$250.00).	s responsible for an			
		(2)	Drives a motor vehicle in a school zone or school walk ze	one without due care			
		<u>\_/</u>	resulting in injury to a minor is guilty of a Class 3 misde				
		SECT	<b>FION 1.(d)</b> G.S. 20-173 reads as rewritten:				
	"§ 20-173		estrians' right-of-way at crosswalks.				
			o v				
	<u>(d)</u>	Unles	ss covered under some other provision of law providing g	reater punishment, a			
	person wł		es a motor vehicle in a school zone or school walk zone at	-			
the speed limit set and posted under this section is responsible for an infraction and is required							
	to pay a j	penalty	of two hundred fifty dollars (\$250.00). If the violation r	results in injury to a			
	minor, the	e persoi	n is guilty of a Class 3 misdemeanor."				
		SEC	<b>FION 2.(a)</b> The Pedestrian Safety Enhancement Fund is est	tablished as a special			
		d within the Department of Transportation to be administered by the Department. The purpose					
	of this fur	this fund is to support pedestrian safety initiatives.					
SECTION 2.(b) Notwithstanding G.S. 143C-5-2, there is appropriated from the							
	Highway Fund to the Department of Transportation for the 2025-2026 fiscal year the sum of ten						
		million dollars (\$10,000,000) in nonrecurring funds to be allocated to the Pedestrian Safety					
	Enhancement Fund established in Section 2(a) of this act. The Department shall allocate these						
	funds as f						
		(1)	Five million dollars (\$5,000,000) for assessing areas lik				
			school walk zones and for infrastructure improvements v				
		(2)	Two million dollars (\$2,000,000) for developing and in	plementing training			
			for school crosswalk guards.				
		(3)	Three million dollars (\$3,000,000) to increase public a				
			pedestrian safety. This public awareness campaign shall (				
			the public about pending school walk zones and (ii)				
			engagement to raise awareness and encourage responsib	ble driving in school			
		CEC	zones and school walk zones.				
			<b>FION 2.(c)</b> This section becomes effective July 1, 2025.	Fastiva Dasambar 1			
	2025 and		<b>FION 3.</b> Except as otherwise provided, this act becomes ef s to offenses committed on or after that date.	recuve December 1,			
	2023, and	appne	s to orienses committee on or after that date.				