

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
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HOUSE PRINCIPAL CLERK

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HOUSE BILL DRH30519-DEa-4

Short Title: Require Seat Belts on School Buses.

(Public)

Sponsors: Representative Greenfield.

Referred to:

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT TO REQUIRE SEAT BELTS AT ALL DESIGNATED SEATING POSITIONS ON
3 SCHOOL BUSES AND ACTIVITY BUSES PURCHASED, LEASED, OR RENTED BY
4 PUBLIC SCHOOL UNITS AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS.

5 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

6 SECTION 1.(a) G.S. 115C-240(c) reads as rewritten:

7 "(c) ~~The State Board of Education shall from time to time adopt such rules and regulations~~
8 ~~with reference to the construction, equipment, color, and maintenance of school buses, the~~
9 ~~number of pupils who may be permitted to ride at the same time upon any bus, and the age and~~
10 ~~qualifications of drivers of school buses as it shall deem to be desirable for the purpose of~~
11 ~~promoting safety in the operation of school buses. Every school bus that is capable of operating~~
12 ~~on diesel fuel shall be capable of operating on diesel fuel with a minimum biodiesel concentration~~
13 ~~of B-20, as defined in G.S. 143-58.4. No school bus shall be operated for the transportation of~~
14 ~~pupils unless such bus is constructed and maintained as prescribed in such regulations and is~~
15 ~~equipped with adequate heating facilities, a standard signaling device for giving due notice that~~
16 ~~the bus is about to make a turn, an alternating flashing stoplight on the front of the bus, an~~
17 ~~alternating flashing stoplight on the rear of the bus, and such other warning devices, fire~~
18 ~~protective equipment and first aid supplies as may be prescribed for installation upon such buses~~
19 ~~by the regulation of the State Board of Education.~~ The State Board shall adopt rules that address
20 the construction, equipment, color, and maintenance of school buses, the number of pupils who
21 may be permitted to ride at the same time upon any bus, and the age and qualifications of drivers
22 of school buses. Every school bus operated for the transportation of pupils shall comply with the
23 rules adopted by the State Board. At a minimum, those rules shall address all of the following:

24 (1) Diesel engine requirements. – Every school bus that is capable of operating
25 on diesel fuel shall be capable of operating on diesel fuel with a minimum
26 biodiesel concentration of B-20, as defined in G.S. 143-58.4.

27 (2) Equipment requirements. – Every school bus shall be equipped with the
28 following:

29 a. Adequate heating facilities.

30 b. A standard signaling device for giving notice that the bus is about to
31 make a turn.

32 c. An alternating flashing stoplight on the rear of the bus.

33 d. Type-two seat belt assemblies that are compliant with all applicable
34 regulations adopted under 49 U.S.C. § 30111 at all designated seating
35 positions, except the State Board may adopt reasonable rules
36 modifying this requirement with respect to integrated child safety



1 restraint systems, the transportation of students with disabilities, and
2 the use of other federally approved restraint or securement systems
3 where required by federal law.

4 e. Other warning devices, fire protective equipment, and first aid
5 supplies deemed necessary by the State Board."

6 **SECTION 1.(b)** G.S. 115C-247 reads as rewritten:

7 **"§ 115C-247. Purchase of activity buses by local boards.**

8 The several local boards of education in the State are hereby authorized and empowered to
9 take title to school buses purchased with local or community funds for the purpose of transporting
10 pupils to and from athletic events and for other local school activity purposes, and commonly
11 referred to as activity buses.

12 Each local board of education that operates activity buses shall adopt a policy relative to the
13 proper use of the vehicles. The policy shall permit the use of these buses for travel to athletic
14 events during the regular season and playoffs and for travel to other school-sponsored activities.

15 The provisions of G.S. 115C-42 shall be fully applicable to the ownership and operation of
16 such activity school buses. Activity buses may also be used as provided in G.S. 115C-243.

17 A local board of education shall only purchase, lease, or rent activity buses equipped with
18 type-two seat belt assemblies that are compliant with all applicable regulations adopted under 49
19 U.S.C. § 30111 at all designated seating positions, except the local board of education may adopt
20 reasonable policies modifying this requirement with respect to integrated child safety restraint
21 systems, the transportation of students with disabilities, and the use of other federally approved
22 restraint or securement systems where required by federal law."

23 **SECTION 1.(c)** G.S. 115C-218.40 reads as rewritten:

24 **"§ 115C-218.40. Charter school transportation.**

25 The charter school may provide transportation for students enrolled at the school. The charter
26 school shall develop a transportation plan so that transportation is not a barrier to any student
27 who resides in the local school administrative unit in which the school is located. The charter
28 school is not required to provide transportation to any student who lives within one and one-half
29 miles of the school. At the request of the charter school and if the local board of the local school
30 administrative unit in which the charter school is located operates a school bus system, then that
31 local board may contract with the charter school to provide transportation in accordance with the
32 charter school's transportation plan to students who reside in the local school administrative unit
33 and who reside at least one and one-half miles of the charter school. A local board may charge
34 the charter school a reasonable charge that is sufficient to cover the cost of providing this
35 transportation. Furthermore, a local board may refuse to provide transportation under this section
36 if it demonstrates there is no available space on buses it intends to operate during the term of the
37 contract or it would not be practically feasible to provide this transportation. If a charter school
38 purchases, leases, or rents any school bus or activity bus for the purpose of providing
39 transportation for students, the charter school shall purchase, lease, or rent vehicles equipped
40 with type-two seat belt assemblies that are compliant with all applicable regulations adopted
41 under 49 U.S.C. § 30111 at all designated seating positions, except the charter school may adopt
42 reasonable policies modifying this requirement with respect to integrated child safety restraint
43 systems, the transportation of students with disabilities, and the use of other federally approved
44 restraint or securement systems where required by federal law."

45 **SECTION 1.(d)** G.S. 115C-238.66 is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:

46 **"(23) School transportation. – If a regional school purchases, leases, or rents any**
47 **school bus or activity bus for the purpose of providing transportation for**
48 **students, the regional school shall purchase, lease, or rent vehicles equipped**
49 **with type-two seat belt assemblies that are compliant with all applicable**
50 **regulations adopted under 49 U.S.C. § 30111 at all designated seating**
51 **positions, except the regional school may adopt reasonable policies modifying**

1 this requirement with respect to integrated child safety restraint systems, the
2 transportation of students with disabilities, and the use of other federally
3 approved restraint or securement systems where required by federal law."

4 **SECTION 1.(e)** G.S. 115C-150.12C is amended by adding a new subdivision to
5 read:

6 **"(39)** School transportation. – If the board of trustees purchases, leases, or rents any
7 school bus or activity bus for the purpose of providing transportation for
8 students, the board of trustees shall purchase, lease, or rent vehicles equipped
9 with type-two seat belt assemblies that are compliant with all applicable
10 regulations adopted under 49 U.S.C. § 30111 at all designated seating
11 positions, except the board of trustees may adopt reasonable policies
12 modifying this requirement with respect to integrated child safety restraint
13 systems, the transportation of students with disabilities, and the use of other
14 federally approved restraint or securement systems where required by federal
15 law."

16 **SECTION 1.(f)** Article 39 of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes is amended by
17 adding a new section to read:

18 **"§ 115C-548.2. Transportation.**

19 If a private church school or a school of religious charter purchases, leases, or rents any school
20 bus, as defined in federal motor vehicle safety standards, the private church school or school of
21 religious charter shall purchase, lease, or rent buses equipped with type-two seat belt assemblies
22 that are compliant with all applicable regulations adopted under 49 U.S.C. § 30111 at all
23 designated seating positions, except the private church school or school of religious charter may
24 adopt reasonable policies modifying this requirement with respect to integrated child safety
25 restraint systems, the transportation of students with disabilities, and the use of other federally
26 approved restraint or securement systems where required by federal law."

27 **SECTION 1.(g)** Article 39 of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes is amended by
28 adding a new section to read:

29 **"§ 115C-566.2. Transportation.**

30 If any qualified nonpublic school purchases, leases, or rents any school bus, as defined in
31 federal motor vehicle safety standards, the qualified nonpublic school shall purchase, lease, or
32 rent buses equipped with type-two seat belt assemblies that are compliant with all applicable
33 regulations adopted under 49 U.S.C. § 30111 at all designated seating positions, except the
34 qualified nonpublic school may adopt reasonable policies modifying this requirement with
35 respect to integrated child safety restraint systems, the transportation of students with disabilities,
36 and the use of other federally approved restraint or securement systems where required by federal
37 law."

38 **SECTION 1.(h)** G.S. 116-239.8(b) is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:

39 **"(9a)** If a laboratory school purchases, leases, or rents any school bus or activity bus
40 for the purpose of providing transportation for students, the laboratory school
41 shall purchase, lease, or rent vehicles equipped with type-two seat belt
42 assemblies that are compliant with all applicable regulations adopted under 49
43 U.S.C. § 30111 at all designated seating positions, except the laboratory
44 school may adopt reasonable policies modifying this requirement with respect
45 to integrated child safety restraint systems, the transportation of students with
46 disabilities, and the use of other federally approved restraint or securement
47 systems where required by federal law."

48 **SECTION 2.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of
49 Public Instruction the sum of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) for the 2026-2027 fiscal year for the
50 purpose of developing policies that public school units may use to implement the requirements
51 of this act.

1 **SECTION 3.** This act is effective when it becomes law. G.S. 115C-240(c)(2)d., as
2 enacted by this act, applies to all contracts to purchase or lease school buses and activity buses
3 executed after June 30, 2030. This act shall not be construed to require any educational entity to
4 equip buses with seat belts at all designated seating positions if the buses are purchased or leased
5 before June 30, 2030.