



Virginia Association for Pupil Transportation

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The Virginia Association for Pupil Transportation (VAPT) respectfully offers the following resolution in opposition to House Bill No. 224 as currently written.

WHEREAS: The pupil transportation departments of the local school divisions throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia are dedicated to providing the safest and most efficient transportation for all students; and

WHEREAS: The Virginia Association for Pupil Transportation recognizes and supports the benefits of using school buses specifically designed to transport students; and

WHEREAS: One school bus carries the equivalent of 36 cars per day; and

WHEREAS: More than 450,000 yellow school buses transport an estimated 25 million children to and from school each day. Each day, those children travel approximately 260 million miles; and

WHEREAS: On average, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reports, about 134 people die in school-vehicle-related crashes each year. Of those, 8% are riding in the buses. Pedestrians, bicyclists and others outside the bus account for 21% of fatalities. 75% of the other fatalities are people in the other vehicles; and

WHEREAS: Since 2004, NHTSA found, 106 people overall, both children and adults, have been killed while riding in or driving a school bus. Of the 106 people killed, 61 were passengers and 45 were drivers

WHEREAS: The thick padding of seats and seat back (compartmentalization) has been proven to work. NHTSA confirms that compartmentalization is a proven restraint strategy for frontal crashes; and

WHEREAS: There is no way to ensure that students would keep them buckled. The only way to ensure compliance would be to hire an aide for each bus, which would be another unfunded mandate and place another burden on the localities; and

WHEREAS: If a bus were to catch fire, the amount of time to unbuckle those students, especially smaller students, could lead to disastrous results; and

WHEREAS: The estimated cost to equip a 77 passenger bus with lap shoulder belts is approximately \$10,000.00. The cost for lap/shoulder belts to the local school divisions only adds to unfunded mandates as it relates to transportation costs; and

WHEREAS: The increased cost of lap should belts could decrease the number of modern up to date buses that localities would be able to purchase during a budget cycle; and

WHEREAS: The requirement that all localities must use buses which are equipped with a restraint system by July 1, 2036, is unrealistic and would create, yet, another unfunded mandate on the localities; now therefore, be it

RESOLVED: The Virginia Association for Pupil Transportation does hereby oppose House Bill No. 224, a bill to amend and reenact section 22.1 - 177 of the Code of Virginia that would require all school buses be equipped with seat belts.

Given under my hand this seventeenth day of January in the year two thousand eighteen.

Michael Ashby,

Chairman, VAPT Legislative Committee