



OHIO LEGISLATIVE SERVICE COMMISSION

Bill Analysis

Margaret E. Marcy

H.B. 680

132nd General Assembly
(As Introduced)

Rep. Barnes

BILL SUMMARY

- Requires all passenger seats on school buses to be equipped with occupant restraining devices, beginning on July 1, 2019.
 - Designates the third full week in October as "Safe School Week."
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CONTENT AND OPERATION

Occupant restraining devices

The bill requires any school bus purchased, owned, leased, or rented by a school, school district, person, or governmental entity in the state to be equipped with sufficient occupant restraining devices (seat belts) for every passenger on the school bus, beginning July 1, 2019.¹ The requirement applies to all existing and new school buses that are purchased, owned, leased, or rented, and specifies that the seat belts be three-point belts (a belt that goes across the shoulder and lap of a person).² The bill makes it a minor misdemeanor to fail to provide seat belts on a school bus.³ For purposes of the bill, a "school" means a community school, a STEM school, a college-preparatory boarding school, a chartered nonpublic school, and a nonchartered nonpublic school. "School districts" include city, exempted village, local and joint vocational school districts.⁴

¹ R.C. 4511.773(B).

² R.C. 4511.773(A)(1) and (B); 49 C.F.R. 571.209, not in the bill.

³ R.C. 4511.773(C).

⁴ R.C. 4511.773(A)(2) and (3).

Thus, the bill's requirement applies to any school bus serving any school (kindergarten through high school) in Ohio.

Current Ohio law requires the Director of Public Safety, in consultation with the Superintendent of Public Instruction, to adopt rules and regulations related to the construction, design, and equipment of all publicly and privately owned and operated school buses.⁵ Additionally, several statutes also specify equipment requirement for school buses in Ohio. For instance, as of May 6, 1986, all new school buses purchased, leased, or rented by a person, school board, or governmental entity are required to have a seat belt for the driver of the bus.⁶

Federal law

Federal laws and regulations establish the minimum standards for the design of and equipment that must be present on a school bus. States, however, can enact laws with stricter requirements than the requirements established at the federal level. Currently, federal law requires small school buses (those with a gross vehicle weight rating of 10,000 pounds or less) to be equipped with either lap or lap/shoulder belts at all designated seating positions.⁷ Conversely, larger school buses are not required to have passenger seat belts installed. However, at least eight states (California, Florida, Louisiana, New Jersey, New York, Nevada, Arizona, and Texas) have passed laws requiring passenger seat belts on school buses, although some of those laws are subject to funding and school district action.⁸

"Safe School Week"

The bill designates the third full week in October as "Safe School Week."⁹ The week coincides with the similar, national designation of "America's Safe Schools Week."¹⁰

⁵ R.C. 4511.76, not in the bill.

⁶ R.C. 4511.772, not in the bill.

⁷ 49 C.F.R. 571.222.

⁸ "School Bus Safety." National Conference of State Legislatures. June 13, 2018. <http://www.ncsl.org/research/transportation/school-bus-safety.aspx>. Accessed on June 14, 2018.

⁹ R.C. 5.49.

¹⁰ National School Safety Center. "Safe Schools Week." <http://www.schoolsafety.us/safe-schools-week>. Accessed on June 11, 2018.



HISTORY

ACTION

DATE

Introduced

05-22-18

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