

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL
No. 1702 Session of
1987

INTRODUCED BY FOX, VAN HORNE, WESTON, MOWERY, DURHAM, NAHILL,
ARTY, RAYMOND, J. TAYLOR, CIVERA AND DONATUCCI, JULY 2, 1987

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION, JULY 2, 1987

AN ACT

1 Amending Title 75 (Vehicles) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated
2 Statutes, further providing for the construction of school
3 buses; requiring seat belts in school buses and the
4 monitoring of their use; providing for the payment of certain
5 costs by the Commonwealth; and requiring additional emergency
6 drills.

7 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
8 hereby enacts as follows:

9 Section 1. Section 4552(c), (d) and (g) of Title 75 of the
10 Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes are amended and the section
11 is amended by adding subsections to read:

12 § 4552. General requirements for school buses.

13 * * *

14 (c) Body construction.--Every school bus shall be of
15 integral unibody construction and shall be designed and
16 constructed to provide a single, closed metal body with adequate
17 ventilation and an entrance door of adequate clearance and safe
18 design visible to and controlled only by the driver. Windows
19 shall be missile-resistant and flame retardant, and operable
20 from the top sash only. Emergency escape shall be made possible

1 by two roof hatches, following Urban Mass Transit Authority-
2 Advanced Design Bus (UMTA-ADB) specifications. At least one
3 emergency exit door of safe design and construction and adequate
4 labeling shall be located in or near the rear of the school
5 bus[. All side windows shall be of a safe design which will
6 provide emergency egress for passengers.], and a second such
7 emergency exit door shall be located on the left side of the
8 school bus. A fail-safe, wired buzzer alarm shall be provided
9 for the two roof hatches and both emergency doors, which will
10 activate whenever the hatches or emergency doors are ajar or not
11 locked. The entrance door shall also provide a transit bus-type
12 emergency exit with provision for local operation by the driver,
13 passengers or rescue workers, as defined in the UMTA-ADB
14 specifications.

15 (d) Seating.--Adequate seating space of safe design and
16 construction shall be provided for each passenger and no
17 passenger shall be carried for which adequate seating space is
18 not available and used. All seats shall be equipped with
19 retractable seat belts designed with slow-speed retainers that
20 speed up when the latch is one foot from the retractor. All
21 exposed parts shall be designed to have no sharp edges. Seat
22 assemblies, framing and the connection to the integral unibody-
23 framed chassis shall follow the United States Department of
24 Transportation Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (USDOT-
25 FMVSS) No.207. Seat belts shall be confined to the Type I
26 restraint only (pelvic lap belts) and follow USDOT-FMVSS No.207
27 except where occupant design percentiles are adjusted for
28 children of ages 4 to 20. All seat assemblies and the bus
29 interior design shall preclude the possibility of seat belt
30 assemblies and retractors snagging loose clothing on extremities

in normal operation or during crash modes. Seat belt assemblies shall be tested to make sure they do not present an injury potential during the crash mode or during normal school bus operation. The retractor shall be of the automatic-locking type and not of the energy-locking type.

(d.1) Monitors.--

(1) Each school bus transporting students to or from school activities shall, in addition to the driver, have a person on board to ensure that all students are properly buckled into their seats by seat belts whenever the school bus is in motion, and to assist students in the event of an emergency.

(2) No person, school district or private school shall be liable for any civil damages as a result of any acts or omissions by such person, school district or private school in carrying out the requirements of paragraph (1), except for acts or omissions intentionally designed to harm, or any grossly negligent acts or omissions which result in harm to a student.

* * *

(g) Emergency drills.--Each school district and the administration of every private school within this Commonwealth shall ensure, through adequate instruction and a minimum of [two actual drills each] one actual drill each month of the school year, that every student is familiar with school bus emergency procedures and equipment, the proper use of seat belts and safe loading and unloading operations.

* * *

(i) Reimbursement by Commonwealth.--The Commonwealth shall pay to each school district, out of moneys appropriated to the

1 Department of Education, the actual audited cost of providing
2 the personnel required to carry out the requirements of
3 subsection (d.1)(1) and of providing the additional equipment
4 required to carry out the additional requirements of subsections
5 (c) and (d) for school buses imposed as of the effective date of
6 this subsection.

7 Section 2. The amendment to 75 Pa.C.S. § 4552(c) shall apply
8 to all school buses purchased after the effective date of that
9 section.

10 Section 3. This act shall take effect as follows:

11 (1) The amendment to 75 Pa.C.S. § 4552(c) shall take
12 effect in 30 days.

13 (2) The remainder of this act shall take effect in 60
14 days.