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MEMO



Senate of Pennsylvania

December 6, 2010

TO: ALL SENATORS
FROM: Stewart J. Greenleaf *Stewart*
SUBJECT: Cosponsorship -- **Seat belts on school buses**

I am reintroducing **Senate Bill 153**, amending the Vehicle Code, Title 75 of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, to require each seat on every school bus to be equipped with or to be fitted with seat belts. No passenger may be carried for which a seat belt is not available. Each passenger must use a seat belt while the bus is in motion.

Six states—California, Florida, Louisiana, New Jersey, New York, and Texas—require seat belts on school buses. A few other states are considering legislation.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), every year, approximately 450,000 public school buses travel approximately 4.3 billion miles to transport 23.5 million children to and from school and school-related activities. Since 1998, NHTSA reports 1,564 people have died in school transportation-related crashes – an average of 142 fatalities a year. Most of the people who lost their lives in those crashes (72%) were occupants of the other vehicles involved. Non-occupants (pedestrians, bicyclists, and etc.) accounted for 20% of the deaths, and school bus occupants accounted for 8%. An average of 19 school-age children die in school transportation-related crashes each year – five occupants of school transportation vehicles and 14 pedestrians.

National data indicates that school bus-related accidents result in 17,000 children being treated in emergency rooms each year. The research, based on 2001-2003 data from a surveillance system operated by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, revealed that crashes accounted for 42% of the accidents.

Seat belts will help reduce rambunctious behavior by children that can distract a driver. A child wearing a seat belt has a much better chance of surviving a school bus accident than a child not wearing a seat belt. The safety of our children outweighs the costs of installing the belts.

If you would like to cosponsor this legislation, please contact Pat Snively of my office by e-mailing her at psnively@pasen.gov.