

By: Menéndez, et al.

S.B. No. 546

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to seat belts on buses that transport children.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Section 547.701, Transportation Code, is amended by amending Subsection (e) and adding Subsections (f), (g), (g-1), and (h) to read as follows:

(e) In this subsection, "bus" includes a school bus, school activity bus, multifunction school activity bus, or school-chartered bus. Except as otherwise provided by this subsection, a [A] bus operated by or contracted for use by a school district for the transportation of schoolchildren shall be equipped with a three-point seat belt for each passenger, including the operator. This subsection does not apply to:

(1) a bus operated by or contracted for use ~~[purchased by a school district that is a model year 2017 or earlier, or~~

~~[(2) a bus purchased] by a school district [that is a model year 2018 or later]~~ if the board of trustees for the school district ~~[~~

~~[(A)]~~ determines that the district's budget does not permit the district to purchase a bus that is equipped with the seat belts required by this subsection; or

(2) a bus for which the warranty would become void if the bus were equipped to comply with this subsection ~~[, and~~

~~[(B) votes to approve that determination in a~~

1 ~~public meeting~~].

2 (f) Not later than the end of the 2025-2026 school year, the
3 board of trustees of a school district that makes a determination
4 under Subsection (e)(1) shall submit to the Texas Education Agency
5 and present in a public meeting of the board a report that includes:

6 (1) the number of buses operated by or contracted for
7 use by the district that:

8 (A) are not equipped with seat belts;

9 (B) are equipped with two-point seat belts; and

10 (C) are equipped with three-point seat belts; and

11 (2) the estimated cost to the district to equip with
12 three-point seat belts each bus operated by or contracted for use by
13 the district that is not equipped with three-point seat belts as
14 required by Subsection (e).

15 (g) Not later than January 1, 2027, the Texas Education
16 Agency shall:

17 (1) collect the information submitted under
18 Subsection (f);

19 (2) calculate the total amount of financial assistance
20 needed for all school districts to come into full compliance with
21 Subsection (e); and

22 (3) summarize and make available to the governor, the
23 lieutenant governor, the speaker of the house of representatives,
24 and each member of the legislature the information described by
25 Subdivisions (1) and (2).

26 (g-1) This subsection and Subsections (f) and (g) expire
27 January 1, 2028.

1 (h) A school district may accept gifts, grants, and
2 donations from any public or private source to implement the
3 requirements of Subsection (e).

4 SECTION 2. Notwithstanding Section 547.701(e),
5 Transportation Code, as amended by this Act, a school district is
6 not required to comply with that subsection before September 1,
7 2029.

8 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2025.