

AN ACT

relating to three-point seat belts on buses that transport schoolchildren.

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

SECTION 1. The heading to Section 547.701, Transportation Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 547.701. ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS FOR SCHOOL BUSES AND OTHER BUSES USED TO TRANSPORT SCHOOLCHILDREN.

SECTION 2. Section 547.701, Transportation Code, is amended by adding Subsection (e) to read as follows:

(e) In this subsection, "bus" includes a school bus and a school activity bus. 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 applies to:

(1) each bus purchased by a school district on or after September 1, 2010, for the transportation of schoolchildren; and

(2) each school-chartered bus contracted for use by a school district on or after September 1, 2011, for the transportation of schoolchildren.

SECTION 3. Chapter 34, Education Code, is amended by adding Sections 34.012, 34.013, 34.014, and 34.015 to read as follows:

Sec. 34.012. THREE-POINT SEAT BELT INSTRUCTION; INFORMATION CLEARINGHOUSE. (a) The State Board of Education shall

1 develop and make available to each school district a program of  
2 instruction in the proper use of a three-point seat belt.

3 (b) The State Board of Education shall serve as a  
4 clearinghouse of best practices for school districts seeking the  
5 most efficient and sensible information regarding school bus  
6 safety, including possible compliance with Section 547.701,  
7 Transportation Code, using school buses originally purchased  
8 without seat belts.

9 Sec. 34.013. BUS SEAT BELT POLICY. A school district shall  
10 require a student riding a bus operated by or contracted for  
11 operation by the district to wear a seat belt if the bus is equipped  
12 with seat belts for all passengers on the bus. A school district  
13 may implement a disciplinary policy to enforce the use of seat belts  
14 by students.

15 Sec. 34.014. FUNDING FOR THREE-POINT SEAT BELTS. (a) A  
16 person may offer to donate three-point seat belts or money for the  
17 purchase of three-point seat belts for a school district's school  
18 buses.

19 (b) The board of trustees of a school district shall  
20 consider any offer made by a person under Subsection (a). The board  
21 of trustees may accept or decline the offer after adequate  
22 consideration.

23 (c) The board of trustees may acknowledge a person who  
24 donates three-point seat belts or money for the purchase of  
25 three-point seat belts for a school bus under this section by  
26 displaying a small, discreet sign on the side or back of the bus  
27 recognizing the person who made the donation. The sign may not

1 serve as an advertisement for the person who made the donation.

2 Sec. 34.015. REPORTING OF BUS ACCIDENTS. (a) In this  
3 section, "bus" means a bus operated by or contracted for use by a  
4 school district to transport schoolchildren.

5 (b) A school district shall report annually to the Texas  
6 Education Agency the number of accidents in which the district's  
7 buses are involved. The agency by rule shall determine the  
8 information to be reported, including:

9 (1) the type of bus involved in the accident;

10 (2) whether the bus was equipped with seat belts;

11 (3) the number of students and adults involved in the  
12 accident;

13 (4) the number and types of injuries sustained by bus  
14 passengers in the accident; and

15 (5) whether the injured passengers were wearing seat  
16 belts at the time of the accident.

17 (c) The Texas Education Agency shall publish the reports  
18 received under this section on its Internet website.

19 SECTION 4. At any time before the dates prescribed in  
20 Section 2 of this Act, a school district may, by its own initiative  
21 and at its own expense, adapt any or all of its existing bus fleet  
22 with a three-point seat belt.

23 SECTION 5. The changes made by Section 2 of this Act do not  
24 take effect unless the legislature appropriates money specifically  
25 for the purpose of reimbursing school districts for expenses  
26 incurred in complying with that section.

27 SECTION 6. This Act takes effect September 1, 2007.

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President of the Senate

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Speaker of the House

I certify that H.B. No. 323 was passed by the House on May 1, 2007, by the following vote: Yeas 130, Nays 6, 2 present, not voting; and that the House concurred in Senate amendments to H.B. No. 323 on May 21, 2007, by the following vote: Yeas 141, Nays 0, 2 present, not voting.

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Chief Clerk of the House

I certify that H.B. No. 323 was passed by the Senate, with amendments, on May 17, 2007, by the following vote: Yeas 31, Nays 0.

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Secretary of the Senate

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_

Date

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Governor