

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6590

As of January 29, 2004

Title: An act relating to safety belts on school buses.

Brief Description: Requiring seat belts on school buses.

Sponsors: Senators McAuliffe, B. Sheldon, Prentice, Kline, Fairley, Brown, Poulsen, Eide, Shin, Franklin, Berkey, Thibaudeau, Fraser, Kohl-Welles, Spanel and Rasmussen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Education: 2/4/04.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Staff: Heather Lewis-Lechner (786-7448)

Background: Under current law, school buses are not required to provide seat belts for students riding the bus.

Under the current mandatory seat belt law, all persons 16 years of age or older riding in a vehicle must wear a seat belt. All person's operating a motor vehicle must ensure that passengers under the age of 16 years are either wearing a seat belt or securely fastened into an approved child restraint device. Any person violating this law has committed a traffic infraction. School buses are currently not included in the definition of motor vehicle for the purpose of this section.

Summary of Bill: Private carrier buses operated as school buses for children at private schools or buses used for transporting children to school activities are now included in the definition of "school bus."

All school buses purchased on or after June 30, 2004, must provide a lap and shoulder style seat belt for every person riding a school bus. All school buses must have a lap and shoulder style seat belt by June 30, 2010.

All students riding in a school bus are subject to the mandatory seat belt law when there is a seat belt available in the school bus.

Appropriation: \$500,000, or as much thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated from the highway safety fund to the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 27, 2004.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.