

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 786

To require the Secretary of Transportation to review laws relating to the illegal passing of school buses and to execute a public safety messaging campaign relating to illegal passing of school buses, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 17 (legislative day, MARCH 16), 2021

Mr. YOUNG (for himself and Mr. PETERS) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

A BILL

To require the Secretary of Transportation to review laws relating to the illegal passing of school buses and to execute a public safety messaging campaign relating to illegal passing of school buses, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Stop for School Buses
5 Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. ILLEGAL PASSING OF SCHOOL BUSES.**

7 (a) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section:

1 (1) DEPARTMENT.—The term “Department”
2 means the Department of Transportation.

3 (2) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
4 the Secretary of Transportation.

5 (b) REVIEW OF ILLEGAL PASSING LAWS.—

6 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 2 years after
7 the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary
8 shall—

9 (A) prepare a compilation of illegal passing
10 laws in all States, including—

11 (i) levels of enforcement and penalties
12 and enforcement issues relating to those
13 laws; and

14 (ii) the impact of those laws on illegal
15 passing of school buses in each State;

16 (B) review existing State laws that may in-
17 hibit effective school bus loading zone counter-
18 measures, including—

19 (i) laws requiring camera visibility of
20 the face of a driver for enforcement action;

21 (ii) laws that may reduce stop-arm
22 camera effectiveness;

23 (iii) laws requiring an officer to wit-
24 ness an event for enforcement actions re-
25 lating to the event; and

1 (iv) lack of primary enforcement for
2 texting-and-driving offenses;

3 (C) evaluate methods used by States to re-
4 view, document, and report to law enforcement
5 school bus stop-arm violations; and

6 (D) on completion of the compilation under
7 subparagraph (A), prepare recommendations re-
8 garding best practices for effective approaches
9 to address illegal passing of school buses.

10 (2) PUBLICATION.—The Secretary shall publish
11 the compilation and recommendations prepared
12 under subparagraphs (A) and (D) of paragraph (1)
13 on the website of the Department.

14 (c) PUBLIC SAFETY MESSAGING CAMPAIGN.—

15 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after
16 the date on which the Secretary publishes the com-
17 pilation and recommendations under subsection
18 (b)(2), the Secretary shall establish and carry out a
19 public safety messaging campaign for distribution to
20 States, divisions of motor vehicles, schools, and other
21 public organizations to highlight the dangers of the
22 illegal passing of school buses, including providing to
23 students and the public information relating to safe
24 loading and unloading of school buses.

1 (2) CONSULTATION.—In developing materials
2 for the campaign under paragraph (1), the Secretary
3 shall consult with—

4 (A) public and private school bus industry
5 representatives; and

6 (B) States.

7 (3) UPDATES.—The Secretary shall periodically
8 update materials for the campaign under paragraph
9 (1).

10 (d) REVIEW OF TECHNOLOGIES.—

11 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 2 years after
12 the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary
13 shall review and evaluate the effectiveness of various
14 technologies to enhance school bus safety, includ-
15 ing—

16 (A) cameras;

17 (B) audible warning systems;

18 (C) enhanced lighting; and

19 (D) other technological solutions.

20 (2) CONTENT.—The review and evaluation
21 under paragraph (1)—

22 (A) shall include an evaluation of, as appli-
23 cable—

24 (i) the costs of new equipment;

1 (ii) potential impacts on overall school
2 bus ridership;

3 (iii) advanced technologies sur-
4 rounding loading zone safety;

5 (iv) motion-activated detection sys-
6 tems that are capable of—

7 (I) detecting pedestrians,
8 bicyclists, and other road users lo-
9 cated near the exterior of a school
10 bus; and

11 (II) alerting the operator of a
12 school bus of the road users described
13 in subclause (I); and

14 (v) school bus lighting systems, to en-
15 sure clear communication to surrounding
16 drivers regarding appropriate actions; and

17 (B) may include other technological solu-
18 tions that enhance school bus safety.

19 (3) CONSULTATION.—In conducting the review
20 under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall consult
21 with—

22 (A) manufacturers of school buses or simi-
23 lar vehicles;

24 (B) manufacturers of various technologies;
25 and

1 (C) school bus industry representatives.

2 (4) PUBLICATION.—The Secretary shall publish
3 the findings of the review under paragraph (1) on
4 the website of the Department.

5 (e) REVIEW OF DRIVER EDUCATION MATERIALS.—

6 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 2 years after
7 the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary
8 shall—

9 (A) review driver education materials
10 across all States to determine whether and the
11 method by which illegal passing of school buses
12 is addressed in—

13 (i) driver education manuals;

14 (ii) noncommercial driver's license
15 testing;

16 (iii) road tests; and

17 (iv) any other driver education mate-
18 rials; and

19 (B) provide to Congress recommendations
20 regarding the means by which States can im-
21 prove education regarding illegal passing of
22 school buses, particularly with respect to new
23 drivers.

1 (2) CONSULTATION.—In conducting the review
2 under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall consult
3 with—

4 (A) school bus industry representatives;

5 (B) States;

6 (C) motor vehicle administrators; and

7 (D) other appropriate motor vehicle ex-
8 perts.

9 (3) PUBLICATION.—The Secretary shall publish
10 the findings of the review under paragraph (1) on
11 the website of the Department.

12 (f) REVIEW OF OTHER SAFETY ISSUES.—

13 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 2 years after
14 the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary
15 shall—

16 (A) conduct research relating to the con-
17 nections between illegal passing of school buses
18 and other safety issues, including—

19 (i) distracted driving;

20 (ii) morning darkness;

21 (iii) poor visibility;

22 (iv) illumination and reach of vehicle
23 headlights;

24 (v) speed limits; and

1 (vi) school bus stop locations in rural
2 areas; and

3 (B) prepare a report describing the find-
4 ings of the research conducted under subpara-
5 graph (A).

6 (2) PUBLICATION.—The Secretary shall publish
7 the report prepared under paragraph (1)(B) on the
8 website of the Department.

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