



National Safety Council Statement  
For the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee  
Highways and Transit Subcommittee  
Hearing on  
Examining the Federal Role in Improving School Bus Safety  
Thursday, July 25, 2019

Thank you for holding this important hearing, “Examining the Federal Role in Improving School Bus Safety,” and for allowing the National Safety Council (NSC) to submit comments for the record.

NSC is a 100 year-old nonprofit organization with the mission of eliminating preventable deaths at work, in homes and communities, and on the road through leadership, research, education and advocacy. Our more than 15,000 member companies represent employees at more than 50,000 U.S. worksites. Last Congress, NSC supported Representative Cohen’s, “*School Bus Safety Act*,” and will continue to support this critical legislation until it becomes law.

As you know, motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for children in the United States.<sup>1</sup> From 2008 to 2017, there were 264 school-age children killed in school transportation-related crashes.<sup>2</sup> Sixty-one were occupants of school buses, 100 were occupants of other vehicles, 97 were pedestrians, five were pedal cyclists and one was another non-occupant.

Seat belts save lives and reduce serious injuries by half.<sup>3</sup> In 2017, seat belts saved almost 15,000 lives.<sup>4</sup> There is no question that seat belts play an important role in keeping passengers safe, but most students on school buses travel without this important safety protection. The National Safety Council supports all school buses being equipped with three-point belts so that children are appropriately protected each and every ride.

Most school buses operating today only include a seat belt for the driver and are not provided for the passengers. However, since 2002, lap and shoulder belts have been made available on school buses, and some school systems do in fact use passenger seat belts.<sup>5</sup> Congress should act to require this important protection on all school buses.

Additionally, the school bus loading zone can be dangerous. All 50 states have laws prohibiting drivers from passing a stopped school bus, yet each day in the United States, it happens tens of thousands of times with virtually no consequences. Incorporating technology on buses to record these violations and allow for the prosecution of violators would deter others from taking the same potentially deadly actions. NSC urges Congress to require the incorporation of these technologies in to school buses.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nhtsa.gov/road-safety/school-bus-safety>

<sup>2</sup> <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/812712>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety/seatbelts/facts.html>

<sup>4</sup> <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/812691>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.nasdpts.org/Documents/NASDPTS%20POSITION%20PAPER%20PASSENGER%20LAP%20SHOULDER%20BELTS%20FINAL%20FEB%202014.pdf>