



Dear fellow Texan,

On June 15 2017, Governor Abbott signed Senate Bill 693, relating to three-point seat belts on buses that transport schoolchildren, into law. We are personally writing to you as the author and sponsor of the bill because we know that student transportation and the safety of those students is of great importance to you, and thus want to ensure that you receive the most accurate information as we disseminate it from the Legislature to help implement this new law.

What the law does

- If a school district purchases, leases, or contracts school buses or school activity buses model year 2018 or newer, those buses must be equipped with three-point seat belts for each passenger.
- The law sets state policy as follows: "it is the public policy of this state to ensure the safety of all students taking every measure possible to protect the lives and well-being of students during transportation on a bus to and from school and extracurricular activities including the measure enacted in Section 547.701(e) [the three-point seat belt requirement]."

What the law does not do

- If the constraints of a school board's budget limits them to the purchase of older school buses, model year 2017 or earlier, this law will not affect that purchase.
- If the constraints of a school board's budget limits them to the purchase of school buses, model year 2018 or newer, without three-point seat belts, this law will not affect that purchase so long as the school board votes to make that determination in a public meeting.
- The law does not require retrofitting. Even if a school bus is deemed a 'model year 2018,' if the bus was manufactured before the law goes into effect, Sept 1 2017, then it would not require retrofitting.
- This law will not affect current federal regulations that already require three-point seat belts on some school buses and all late model motor coaches.

Though the Legislature cannot protect children from all the world's dangers, we do have a responsibility to do our best to prioritize their safety while they are in the state's care. We hope that this new law will help prevent future loss of life or injury and serve as a starting point for what's needed in the future to ensure the safe passage of all children to and from school. The loss of one child's life is one too many.

We look forward to working with all of Texas' superintendents, school boards, transportation departments, and state agencies who will be assisting in the implementation of this new law. Please do not hesitate to contact my office if we may be of assistance to you, or if you have any questions regarding this law. Thank you for all that you do for your students, and all that you do in public service to the state of Texas.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sylvia R. Garcia".

Sylvia R. Garcia
State Senator, District Six

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dade Phelan".

Dade Phelan
State Representative, District Twenty-One