



For Immediate Release

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NSTA COMMENDS PASSAGE OF LEGISLATION PROVIDING DIRECT RELIEF FOR PRIVATE SCHOOL BUS CONTRACTORS

The National School Transportation Association (NSTA) appreciates the work of Congress to pass legislation to provide relief to the private school bus industry, which has been struggling during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Private school bus operators provide nearly 40 percent of the nation's school bus service in 200,000 yellow school buses with 300,000 employees. Each day, almost 26 million children rely on the school bus as their primary way to get to and from school in the safest way possible. The industry not only transports children to and from school, but it also provides critical delivery of school nutrition, supplies and Wi-Fi to students not able to attend school in-person. The industry has suffered severe economic losses and furloughed thousands of employees over the last 8 months of the pandemic. NSTA estimates private school bus operators have lost \$3.5 billion in revenue (@45%) since March due to many school districts not paying contracts during school closures.

For the first time, Congress has created a direct relief program by providing grants to assist thousands of private school bus operators struggling due to the checkerboard of school closures throughout the pandemic. The Consolidated Appropriations Act for 2021 contains \$900 billion in additional Coronavirus relief, including \$2 billion for the Coronavirus Economic Relief for Transportation Services Act (CERTS) Act. The industry has been vigorously advocating for this legislation since it was introduced in May.

NSTA commends and thanks the sponsors of the CERTS legislation (S.4150 and H.R.7642), Senators Susan Collins and Jack Reed and Congressmen Darrin LaHood and Albio Sires for their tireless support and helping to ensure the legislation was contained in the relief package passed by Congress last night. NSTA also salutes the 60 Senators and 271 House Members who cosponsored the CERTS bills whose support was invaluable to achieving this positive result.

"School closures in the spring and fall have negatively impacted private school bus companies due to many school districts refusing to pay contractors any or just a portion of their contract during these closures. The CERTS provision in the Coronavirus relief bill will provide needed relief for these companies to bridge the uncertainties of payment during a pandemic that is still raging, help keep our valued employees tied to our companies, and ensure our industry's survival," according to NSTA President John Benish of Cook-Illinois Corporation.

"The real winners of the CERTS provision in the Covid-19 relief bill are the schoolchildren who will be ensured their yellow school bus and their school bus driver they rely on as the safest way to and from school will continue to be available to them when their school is in session or returns to in person learning. While the final funding level is lower than we'd hoped, NSTA



applauds Congress for recognizing the critical role of the private school bus industry and their need for relief,” added Curt Macysyn, NSTA Executive Director.

In addition to the CERTS provision, the legislation contains other important avenues for relief that will be helpful to many private school bus operators. These provisions include \$54 billion for K-12 education to relieve the budget pressures on school districts, continuation of provision encouraging school districts to pay their employees and contractors, \$284 billion for continuation of the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) for first and second forgivable loans, business deductibility for PPP expenses, \$20 billion for Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL), and extension of the Employee Retention Tax Credit.

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About NSTA: National School Transportation Association has been the voice of private school bus contractors, manufacturers and suppliers since 1964. The association provides school transportation professionals with the tools and resources they need to make school buses safe, affordable, and efficient nationwide.