



2023-02

**THE NATIONAL SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION
SUPPORTS REQUIRING COLLISION AVOIDANCE SYSTEMS AND AUTOMATIC
EMERGENCY BRAKING TECHNOLOGIES ON ALL NEW SCHOOL BUSES AND
RECOMMENDS THREE-POINT SEAT BELTS AND STOP-ARM CAMERAS ON ALL
SCHOOL BUSES**

WHEREAS, every day nearly half a million school buses take over 20 million children to school, school activities and school sporting eventsⁱ; and

WHEREAS, from 2011 to 2020 there were 218 school-age children who died in school-transportation-related crashes and 44 were occupants of school transportation vehicles according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)ⁱⁱ; and

WHEREAS, while school buses are the safest form of school transportation in the U.S.ⁱⁱⁱ death and injury to children riding school buses could be further prevented if children were required to wear seatbelts on school buses, as seat belts further enhance protection already provided by compartmentalization; and

WHEREAS, while laws across the nation require passengers in cars to buckle up, federal regulations only require seatbelts on small school buses under 10,000 pounds, and only twelve states have passed a variety of laws requiring school buses to be equipped with seatbelts; and

WHEREAS, nonprofit organizations, including the National Safety Council^{iv} and the American Academy of Pediatrics^v, have for years encouraged the use of seat belts on school buses; and

WHEREAS, in 2015, the NHTSA Administrator, Mark Rosekind, speaking in favor of lap and shoulder belts on buses said, "NHTSA has not always spoken with a clear voice on the issue of seat belts on school buses. So let me clear up any ambiguity now: The position of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration is that seat belts save lives...every child on every school bus should have a three-point seat belt;"^{vi} and

WHEREAS, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) has recommended that all new school buses be required to be equipped with three-point lap and shoulder belts, collision avoidance systems and automatic emergency braking technologies; and

WHEREAS, in 2019 and 2022 the National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services conducted surveys, adjusting for 100% of the school bus drivers in the U.S., and reported just over 232,000 illegal passings in both 2019 and 2022. In a 180-day school year, study findings point to more than 41.8 million U.S. motorist violations per year, "showing illegal passings of stopped school buses are at an epidemic level"^{vii}; and

WHEREAS, NHTSA recommends the use of stop-arm cameras to reduce the illegal passing of school buses and increase stop-arm compliance^{viii};

WHEREAS, the Traffic Safety Committee of the National Sheriffs' Association (NSA), after a thorough review and in the spirit of saving every life possible, recommends the following position be adopted; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the National Sheriffs' Association calls upon Congress and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to adopt regulations mandating collision avoidance systems and automatic emergency braking technologies be standard equipment on all new school buses; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the National Sheriffs' Association encourages school districts and bus operators to consider the safety potential of purchasing new school buses equipped with three-point seat belts and stop-arm cameras and/or retrofitting existing school buses where possible.

ⁱ School bus transportation data accessed January 13, 2023, from [Schoolbus Fleet](#)

ⁱⁱ [NHTSA Traffic Safety Facts: School-Transportation-Related Crashes](#), June 2022.

ⁱⁱⁱ [NHTSA reports](#) school buses are the safest mode of transportation for kids traveling to and from school.

^{iv} Information retrieved from <https://injuryfacts.nsc.org/motor-vehicle/road-users/school-bus/> on January 13, 2023.

^v Information retrieved from <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/on-the-go/Pages/Where-We-Stand-Seat-Belts-on-the-School-Bus.aspx#:~:text=To%20ensure%20the%20safety%20of,systems%20in%20all%20motor%20vehicles>. On January 13, 2023.

^{vi} <https://thehill.com/policy/transportation/259662-feds-recommending-seat-belts-for-school-buses/>

^{vii} <https://www.nasdpts.org/resources/Documents/2022%20NASDPTS%20Illegal%20Passing%20Results%20Press%20Release%209-2022%20FINAL.pdf>

^{viii} <https://www.nhtsa.gov/school-bus-safety/reducing-illegal-passing-school-buses>