
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO ONLY PURCHASE OR LEASE
LARGE SCHOOL BUSES THAT HAVE AN OPERABLE SEAT BELT ASSEMBLY
AT ALL DESIGNATED SEATING POSITIONS AND SEAT BACKS THAT ARE
AT LEAST TWENTY-FOUR INCHES IN HEIGHT.

1 WHEREAS, federal and state laws require certain motor
2 vehicle drivers and passengers to use seat belts because seat
3 belts provide a measure of protection during accidents; and
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5 WHEREAS, passenger cars, light trucks, and vans are
6 required under federal law to have seat belts at all designated
7 seating positions; and
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9 WHEREAS, neither federal nor Hawaii law requires seat belts
10 on school buses that have a gross vehicle weight rating of more
11 than ten thousand pounds, which is the standard weight of a
12 large school bus; and
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14 WHEREAS, despite increased federal standards for school bus
15 passenger safety and crash protection, there are still thousands
16 of injuries to children throughout the country each year due to
17 school bus accidents; and
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19 WHEREAS, children suffer both minor and serious injuries to
20 their head, neck, back, and stomach when striking the roof,
21 windows, seat backs, and other school bus passengers during
22 crashes; and
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24 WHEREAS, opponents of seat belts on large school buses
25 argue that strong, well-padded, energy absorbing seats and
26 higher seat backs compartmentalize passengers during a crash,
27 thereby providing adequate safety; and
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29 WHEREAS, a comprehensive, in-depth study in 1989 by the
30 Transportation Research Board found that seat belts provide



H.C.R. NO. 71

1 additional crash protection on compartmentalized school buses;
2 and

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4 WHEREAS, in addition, a National Highway Traffic Safety
5 Administration study found that approximately one-third of the
6 fatal crashes between 1977 and 1992 were non-frontal crashes
7 from which compartmentalization is not designed to protect; and

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9 WHEREAS, most school bus fatalities occur in rollovers; and

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11 WHEREAS, crash test and case study data indicate that seat
12 belts provide improved crash protection and are especially
13 beneficial in side-impact and rollover school bus accidents; and

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15 WHEREAS, seat belts also reduce other types of injuries by
16 restraining children who may otherwise be out of their seats,
17 thereby improving passenger behavior and reducing distractions
18 to school bus drivers; and

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20 WHEREAS, California, Florida, Louisiana, New Jersey, and
21 New York require school buses to meet a higher safety standard
22 than established under federal law; now, therefore,

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24 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
25 Twenty-fourth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular
26 Session of 2008, the Senate concurring, that the Department of
27 Education is urged to only purchase or lease large school buses
28 that have an operable seat belt assembly at all designated
29 seating positions and seat backs that are at least twenty-four
30 inches in height; and

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32 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Education is
33 urged to adopt rules requiring the use of seat belt assemblies,
34 when available, by pupils and appropriate school discipline for
35 any pupil in violation; and

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37 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
38 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Chairperson of the
39 Board of Education and the Superintendent of Education.

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Mele Carroll

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