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## HOUSE 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  
31 additional crash protection on compartmentalized school buses;  
32 and  
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1 WHEREAS, in addition, a National Highway Traffic Safety  
2 Administration study found that approximately one-third of the  
3 fatal crashes between 1977 and 1992 were non-frontal crashes  
4 from which compartmentalization is not designed to protect; and

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

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

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

16  
17 WHEREAS, California, Florida, Louisiana, New Jersey, and  
18 New York require school buses to meet a higher safety standard  
19 than established under federal law; now, therefore,

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

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

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33 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this  
34 Resolution be transmitted to the Chairperson of the Board of  
35 Education and the Superintendent of Education.

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OFFERED BY:

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