



The National Coalition for School Bus Safety

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Hon. Anthony Foxx, Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Foxx:

On behalf of The National Coalition for School Bus Safety let me congratulate on your recent appointment. We look forward to your most successful term as leader of the Department.

Today the National Transportation Safety Board approved their long awaited report concerning two similar school bus accidents in New Jersey and Florida. These two states are among six that now require seat belts on all their school busses. The accidents provided the first significant accident where the value the use and non-use of seat belts in significant accidents could be scientifically evaluated. The investigation was enhanced by the presence and function of four video cameras inside the bus where the crash forces on and injury production of the 30 children could be analyzed in detail.

There were a total of 55 children on both buses with 2 fatalities and 13 severe injuries. The Board found that in these side impact accidents some of the passengers were wearing their seat belts while others were not. Unbelted occupants were thrown from side to side causing “significant potential for injury” while those wearing their seat belts were retained in their seats and enjoyed reduced injury potential. The Board went on to point out that lap shoulder belts would provide even greater protection.

Recently the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) upgraded the school bus seating Standard 222 to include engineering requirements for lap-shoulder belts on school buses. Inexplicably they mandated their installation only on the small buses; the familiar large yellow buses that transport most students were exempt and left to local option. After all, you do suspend the laws of physics because the vehicle is larger.

Now, with the evidence based conclusions by the Safety Board that implementation of lap-shoulder belts on all newly manufactured school buses will save lives and reduce injuries, you are urged to use your good office to see that Standard 222 is upgraded to include all new buses.

Because Standard 222 is in effect, the engineering completed, commercial manufacturing of belts in place and bus builder currently producing thousands of compliant large buses for California and thousands more smaller buses for the nation, implementation of the change should be relatively easy and rapid.

I am enclosing for your information and with greater detail a copy of the petition to NHTSA asking for installation on all buses when the Standard was being considered.

Ordering seat belts on all buses would mark a wonderful and popular start to your tenure at Transportation. Look forward to your positive reaction.

Sincerely,

Arthur L. Yeager, National Coordinator
The National Coalition for School Bus Safety