



Rhode Island General Assembly

Office of the House Minority Leader

NEWS

Contact: Ian O'Connor
Tel: (401) 222-2259
Email: IOConnor@rilegislature.gov

Date: April 11, 2018

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Rep. Nardolillo Fights for Seat Belts on School Buses

State Representative Robert Nardolillo III (R District 28 – Coventry) has introduced legislation requiring all school buses in Rhode Island be equipped with seat belts to protect students.

“I am once again calling on the state to do what is right and avoid a potential tragedy. It is a fact that seat belts save countless lives every year yet we do not require them on school buses despite evidence that shows they can prevent serious injury or even death in the event of an accident,” stated Rep. Nardolillo.

The bill (2018-H 8067) would require that every new school bus purchased or leased for use in Rhode Island be equipped with a three-point seat belt for every passenger after 2020. The legislation would also require every school district to train staff on the proper usage of the new seat belts including how to evacuate a bus equipped with them.

Rep. Nardolillo is not alone in his call for seat belts on school buses. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) shifted its position on the issue in 2015 and now recommends that school buses to be equipped with seat belts to protect children. The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) has also come out in favor of the measure after studying a number of school bus crashes that resulted in injury or death stating, “A seat belt could have lessened their injuries or even saved their lives.”

Some have argued that school buses are designed to keep children safe without the use of seat belts but data from the NTSB suggests otherwise. Simulations based on fatal school bus accidents have shown that unbelted students are at a much higher risk of injury during a crash compared to those who are strapped in. According to those same simulations, a three-point seat belt provides the most protection in the event of a crash.

Rep. Nardolillo went on to say, “We have industry experts and computer models that show seat belts are the best way to keep students safe in the event of an accident. Several states have passed similar laws and I feel it is time for Rhode Island to do the same. This is a common sense measure to keep our children safe and I urge my fellow legislators to support it.”

###