

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2021 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

House Bill 2541

BY DELEGATES PUSHKIN, ROWE AND BARACH

(BY REQUEST OF THE KANAWHA COUNTY COMMISSION)

[Introduced February 16, 2021; Referred to the
Committee on Education then Finance]

1 A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding thereto a new section,
 2 designated §18-5-13e, relating to seat belts on school buses; stating findings; requiring
 3 seat belts on every new school bus; providing authority to retrofit older buses with seat
 4 belts as funds are available; and providing for rules.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 5. COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION.

§18-5-13e. Seat belts required on new school buses; authority to install seatbelts on certain older buses.

1 (a) The Legislature finds that school children are exposed to unacceptable risks of injury
 2 and death from crashes and other accidents while being transported in school buses which lack
 3 seat belts. Since 2018 The National Transportation Safety Board has recommended that all new
 4 school buses be equipped with seat belts. Several states now require seat belts on all new buses
 5 and other states are considering similar legislation. Most school children are already accustomed
 6 to complying with seatbelt requirements for passenger cars.

7 (b) Any new school bus purchased by a county board of education after July 1, 2021, shall
 8 be equipped with seat belts for the protection of the driver and passengers. A county board may
 9 retrofit older buses with seat belts if deemed practicable and funds are available.

10 (c) The State Board of Education shall establish by rule clear guidance for bus drivers and
 11 passengers concerning required use of seat belts while on a school bus, and any exceptions for
 12 medical or other reasons approved by the board. The board shall propose rules for legislative
 13 approval and may promulgate emergency rules in accordance with §29A-3B-1 et seq. of this code
 14 to implement the provisions of this section.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to require that all new school buses be equipped with seat belts, to provide for retrofitting older busses with seat belts if funds available, and to provide for rulemaking.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law, and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.