



**SB 1072 (Mendoza)**

**As Amended on June 29, 2016**

**PAUL LEE SCHOOL BUS SAFETY LAW**

**Fact Sheet**

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**SUMMARY**

SB 1072 protects children getting to and from school and child care facilities by establishing safe pupil transportation procedures to help prevent children from being left on school buses unattended.

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**BACKGROUND**

For twenty three million students nationwide, the school day begins and ends with a trip on a school bus. Although school buses provide one of the safest modes of transportation, there are still school bus-related injuries, and unfortunately some fatalities, every year.

In California, school districts provide transportation between home and school for about one in eight students. About 700,000, or about 12 percent, of California students ride the school bus on a daily basis. Districts provide transportation for a variety of reasons, including concerns that students lack alternative methods of getting to school as well as federal laws that require certain groups of students, including some students with disabilities, to be bused.

Loading and unloading is the most dangerous time for students and can be a matter of life or death. Children left unattended on a bus may be subject to extremely cold or hot temperatures causing injury, trauma, or death. Tragically, a special-needs student recently died after being left inside a bus on a hot day in Whittier, California.

Unfortunately, across the nation there are regular news reports describing incidents of children being stranded inside a bus for hours until someone realizes they are missing. These reports include cases involving special-needs students, who are often the most vulnerable and sometimes non-verbal.

This bill seeks to prevent children being left on buses unattended by adding safe pupil transportation measures to ensure drivers check the bus at the end of their routes to make certain all children are off the vehicle.

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**CURRENT LAW**

Current law requires public and private school districts to create and follow a transportation safety plan containing procedures to ensure the safe transportation of pupils. The plan must include specific procedures on boarding and exiting a school bus at each pupil's bus stop and at the final trip destination.

Additionally, to operate a school bus, a driver is required to obtain a California Special Driver Certificate from the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), which entails classroom instruction, special training, and testing. Annual renewal of the certificate is required and involves 10 hours of renewal classroom instruction, behind-the-wheel training, or in-service training.

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## **THIS BILL**

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- Requires, on or before the 2018-19 school year, each school bus, youth bus, and child care motor vehicle to be equipped with an operational child safety alert system.
- Requires school pupil activity buses (SPABs) to be equipped with child alert systems, except when the SPAB is not used exclusively to transport students and when various safety precautions are in place, including specific chaperone and bus driver requirements.
- Requires the bus driver and chaperone to fill out a form verifying that all required procedures have been followed. Local education agencies (LEAs) are required to keep these forms for a minimum of two years.
- Requires the California Highway Patrol (CHP), on or before January 1, 2018, to adopt regulations governing the specification, installation and use of child safety alarms.
- Adds charter schools to the list of local education agencies (LEAs) that are required to develop a safe transportation plan, if they provide transportation services.
- Requires LEAs to update their transportation plan to include procedures to ensure that a pupil is not left unattended on a school bus, SPAB, or youth bus.

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## **STATUS**

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- Assembly Floor

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## **SUPPORT**

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- CA State Council on Developmental Disabilities (Sponsor)
- American Academy of Pediatrics, California
- The Arc and United Cerebral Palsy California Collaboration
- Association of California School Administrators
- Autism Speaks
- CA School Nurses Organization

- Center for Autism and Related Disorders
- East bay Legislative Coalition
- H.E.A.R.T.S. Connection Family Resource Center
- Los Angeles Unified School District
- RKH Law Office
- Whittier Union High School

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## **OPPOSITION**

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- None

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## **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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