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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2019

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A N A C T

RELATING TO MOTOR AND OTHER VEHICLES -- MISCELLANEOUS RULES

Introduced By: Senators Gallo, Satchell, Sheehan, and Archambault

Date Introduced: January 24, 2019

Referred To: Senate Education

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1           SECTION 1. Chapter 31-22 of the General Laws entitled "Miscellaneous Rules" is  
2 hereby amended by adding thereto the following section:

3           **31-22-11.10. Safety belts in school buses.**

4           (a) Every new school bus purchased or leased on or after January 1, 2021, for use in the  
5 state shall be equipped with a combination pelvic and upper torso 3-point passenger seat belt  
6 system for the operator and each passenger seat.

7           (b) Each school district shall prepare a plan for the implementation and use of 3-point  
8 seat belts including:

9           (1) Training on the proper securement and adjustment of 3-point seat belts;

10           (2) Communicated policy requiring usage and consequences for non-usage;

11           (3) Evacuation drills with unbuckling exercises in case of emergency;

12           (4) Training in service and maintenance of seats and 3-point seat belts;

13           (5) Said plan shall be approved by the commissioner of the state department of education  
14 and shall be in effect commencing January 1, 2021.

15           (c) Each plan submitted to the commissioner in accordance with subsection (b) of this  
16 section shall require each school district to prioritize the allocation of buses equipped with 3-point  
17 seat belt systems to ensure that elementary schools within the district and sports teams and field  
18 trips receive first priority.

19           (d) Each plan shall require that each passenger on a school bus that is equipped with 3-

1 point seat belt systems shall wear a properly adjusted and fastened 3-point seat belt systems at all  
2 times while the bus is in operation. The plan shall also indicate the manner by which each school  
3 district shall enforce compliance with this requirement.

4 (e) The state, any city or town, any school district, any school bus operator whether or not  
5 under contract with a school district, or an agent or employee of a school district or operator,  
6 including a teacher or volunteer serving as a chaperone, shall not be liable for any claim arising  
7 out of a violation or the implementation or any other provision of this chapter including, but not  
8 limited to, injury to a school bus passenger solely because the injured party was not wearing a  
9 safety belt or for an injury caused solely by another passenger's use or nonuse of a safety belt or  
10 restraint system in dangerous or unsafe manner.

11 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF

A N A C T

RELATING TO MOTOR AND OTHER VEHICLES -- MISCELLANEOUS RULES

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1           This act would require all new school buses purchased/leased on or after January 1, 2021,  
2 be equipped with a 3-point seat belt system for the operator/passenger seats and requires school  
3 districts to prepare implementation, use and compliance plans.

4           This act would take effect upon passage.

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