



SECURES Act of 2018

Congressman Josh Gottheimer (NJ-05)

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The bipartisan Secure Every Child Under the Right Equipment Standards (SECURES) Act—co-led by Rep. John Faso (NY-19), with Senate companion legislation introduced by Sen. Bob Menendez:

- **Requires the Department of Transportation to begin the rulemaking process on new Federal requirements for seat belts on school buses.**

Current Federal law requires seat belts on small school buses (under 10,000 pounds), but not on larger school buses. Only eight states, including New Jersey, have passed laws requiring seat belts on all school buses, regardless of weight. This bill would direct the Department of Transportation (DOT) to update the nationwide standard, so that all students across the country have the same level of protection.

- **Directs the Department of Transportation to consider the added safety benefits of lap/shoulder seat belts in the rulemaking process.**

On May 22, 2018, in a special investigation report on school bus crashes in Maryland and Tennessee, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) for the first time formally recommended that all new school buses be equipped with lap/shoulder belts. NTSB concluded, “Properly worn lap/shoulder belts provide the highest level of protection for school bus passengers in all crash scenarios, including frontal, side, and rear impacts—and rollovers.”

Current New Jersey law only requires lap belts, instead of three-point lap/shoulder belts. NTSB specifically recommended that New Jersey and three other states that currently only require lap belts upgrade their requirements to lap/shoulder belts. This bill would require DOT to include NTSB’s recommendations in the Federal rulemaking process, so that children in every U.S. state are as safe as humanly possible when riding a school bus.

- **Encourages innovative measures to ensure that students are using seat belts.**

Three-point seat belts are only effective in protecting kids during a crash if they are being worn properly. That’s why this bill would encourage DOT to consider any innovative approaches to seat belt detection, seat belt reminder systems, and seat belt violation alert systems that could be incorporated into school bus designs.

Building on the SECURES Act, I am writing to state and federal transportation officials at the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration and the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission, asking them to study and take immediate action to ensure that all bus drivers are qualified to drive our children.