

# Transportation Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** SB-185

AN ACT CONCERNING SCHOOL BUSES EQUIPPED WITH SEAT SAFETY

**Title:** BELTS.

**Vote Date:**

**Vote Action:**

**PH Date:** 2/26/2024

**File No.:**

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## **SPONSORS OF BILL:**

Transportation Committee

## **REASONS FOR BILL:**

This bill seeks reinstates a 2010 school bus seatbelt account that would allow municipalities to apply for money to install seatbelts in school busses. This fund would encourage but not mandate municipalities to put seatbelts on their school busses with help from the state government. Ideally with assistance more municipalities will install seatbelts on their school busses making Connecticut's children safer.

## **NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

Testimony was offered by the following people in support of installing seatbelts on school busses:

**John Baldino**

**Michelle Ferrara**

**Theresa Baldino, Grandmother**

**Heidi Pretash, First Grade Teacher**

**Kristin Barone**

**Therese DeMatteo**

**Nuria Miller**

**David Sones**

**Meg Talalas**

**3 Anonymous Sources**

## **NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

**Charles Wailonis:** Voices his opposition, citing the CT Board of education opposition of a 2018 bill and concerns over seatbelts in school bus fires.

### **Additional Comments:**

**Connecticut School Transportation Association:** COSTA offered comments on the history of the fund and potential concerns with seatbelts on school buses. The previous fund was put into place after a 2010 accident that killed one student, the only recorded case of a fatal CT school bus that "anyone could recall." The bill was funded by taking 50% of the existing sales tax on school buses and taking 50\$ of the 125\$ operators license restoration fee and placing in a fund that schools could apply for. This money was left largely untouched by school districts, with only three municipalities mandating their use, and was swept into the general fund in 2017. COSTA then proceeds to voice their opposition for a mandate, citing the cost for installing seatbelts per bus (15,000\$), how buses are already the safest mode of transportation for kids, and difficulty enforcing children wearing their seatbelts.

**Reported by: Noah Gulla**

**Date: 3/8/24**