



**Survival Factors Factual Attachment:
Industry Response Letter to Congress**

Rochester, Indiana

HWY19MH003

(3 pages)



Dear Member of Congress:

The National School Transportation Association (NSTA), the National Association for Pupil Transportation (NAPT), and the National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services (NASDPTS) request your help in addressing an important school bus safety issue, illegal passing of stopped school buses.

Collaboratively, our three organizations represent the nation's school transportation community, including all operators of school buses both public and private and state regulators of school buses. We are specifically requesting your co-sponsorship of the STOP for School Buses Act of 2019 (H.R.2218/S.1254), introduced in the House by Congresswomen Jackie Walorski (R-IN) and Julia Brownley (D-CA), and in the Senate by Senators Todd Young (R-IN) and Gary Peters (D-MI). This bipartisan legislation calls upon the Department of Transportation to undertake a comprehensive review of all issues involved with illegal passing of school buses and make recommendations to Congress on best practices to deal with this pervasive, national safety problem.

The bill directs DOT to review state laws, enforcement and penalties, technology, driver education, and distraction. It calls upon DOT to create a public safety messaging campaign on the danger of illegally passing stopped school buses. The ongoing efforts of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to study illegal passing and develop safety countermeasures are recognized and appreciated. We believe guidance from Congress will enable NHTSA to broaden its efforts on all aspects of illegal passing and expedite best practice recommendations.

School bus transportation remains the safest form of transportation compared to all other modes, according to DOT statistics. Children are 70 times safer going to and from school in a yellow school bus than by walking, biking, being driven by parents, or, especially, as occupants of vehicles driven by teenagers. Despite the unparalleled overall safety record of school bus transportation, school bus riders remain vulnerable during the portion of their trip when they are waiting at bus stops, crossing streets, and loading or unloading from the school bus. Passing of stopped school buses, illegal in all 50 states, has reached epidemic proportions. In the most recent annual observational survey in 2018, 105,306 school bus drivers in 38 states reported 83,944 vehicles illegally passed their stopped school buses in one day. Based on these observations, an estimated 15 million vehicles will illegally pass stopped school buses in a 180-day school year. The problem is likely much worse, because this alarming figure does not factor in illegal passing that may have been experienced among the other 80 percent of the nation's school bus drivers who were unable to participate in the voluntary national survey. [<http://www.nasdpts.org/StopArm/index.html>].

Illegal passing can have tragic consequences. Last October, in Rochester, Indiana, three children from the same family were killed by an oncoming driver who failed to stop as the kids were crossing the road to board their school bus. These tragedies CAN be prevented.

We look forward to your support of the STOP for School Buses Act. Thank you for your consideration of this important issue.

Sincerely,



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