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SEAT BELTS/SCHOOL BUSES

FLORIDA PTA POSITION

SEAT BELTS AND 28" SEAT BACKS IN NEW SCHOOL BUSES: The Florida PTA supports legislation requiring any new bus purchased for the purpose of transporting school children in the state of Florida be equipped with padded 28-inch seat backs and seat belts.

National PTA Position

National PTA shall support legislation or regulation requiring any new bus purchased for the purpose of transporting school children to be equipped with seat belts, and shall encourage all school districts to implement strong seat belt use, education, and enforcement policies.

Background

In 1999, Florida PTA successfully advocated for the passage of a law requiring all new school buses purchased as of January 2001, be equipped with seat belts. Legislation has been filed to make the law optional, leaving the decision up to school districts. The safety of children is of paramount importance to PTA and we believe that seat belts on school buses will help save children's lives and minimize injuries in the event of an accident. Currently all new school buses are equipped with lap belts.



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Talking Points

- In 30 years of research the National Safety Transportation Board has not found even one instance where a seat belt would be detrimental to the safety of children.
- In the event of a roll over, seat belts keep the child safely in the compartment, minimize injuries and save lives.
- Prevent children from leaning out of windows, thus protecting them from needless injuries to heads and arms.
- Develops a lifelong habit of buckling up –in cars, airplanes and everywhere else.
- PTA supports the use of lap seat belts in conjunction with 28” padded seat backs (similar to the configuration in an airplane seat with lap belts).
- Opponents state that a 3 point belt (harness type) is safer and they would support legislation that asked for 3 point belts.
- Districts that argue against lap belts and for 3 point belts do not need the law changed. The current law is flexible and allows any restraint approved by the Federal government, including the 3 point belt.

March 2005

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