

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA**  
**SESSION 2025**

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**HOUSE BILL 1204**

Short Title:    Require Seat Belts on School Buses. (Public)

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Sponsors:     Representatives Greenfield, Willis, and Logan (Primary Sponsors).  
*For a complete list of sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly web site.*

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Referred to:    Appropriations, if favorable, Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House

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May 5, 2026

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT TO REQUIRE SEAT BELTS AT ALL DESIGNATED SEATING POSITIONS ON  
SCHOOL BUSES AND ACTIVITY BUSES PURCHASED, LEASED, OR RENTED BY  
PUBLIC SCHOOL UNITS AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

**SECTION 1.(a)** G.S. 115C-240(c) reads as rewritten:

"(c) ~~The State Board of Education shall from time to time adopt such rules and regulations with reference to the construction, equipment, color, and maintenance of school buses, the number of pupils who may be permitted to ride at the same time upon any bus, and the age and qualifications of drivers of school buses as it shall deem to be desirable for the purpose of promoting safety in the operation of school buses. Every school bus that is capable of operating on diesel fuel shall be capable of operating on diesel fuel with a minimum biodiesel concentration of B-20, as defined in G.S. 143-58.4. No school bus shall be operated for the transportation of pupils unless such bus is constructed and maintained as prescribed in such regulations and is equipped with adequate heating facilities, a standard signaling device for giving due notice that the bus is about to make a turn, an alternating flashing stoplight on the front of the bus, an alternating flashing stoplight on the rear of the bus, and such other warning devices, fire protective equipment and first aid supplies as may be prescribed for installation upon such buses by the regulation of the State Board of Education.~~ The State Board shall adopt rules that address the construction, equipment, color, and maintenance of school buses, the number of pupils who may be permitted to ride at the same time upon any bus, and the age and qualifications of drivers of school buses. Every school bus operated for the transportation of pupils shall comply with the rules adopted by the State Board. At a minimum, those rules shall address all of the following:

(1) Diesel engine requirements. – Every school bus that is capable of operating on diesel fuel shall be capable of operating on diesel fuel with a minimum biodiesel concentration of B-20, as defined in G.S. 143-58.4.

(2) Equipment requirements. – Every school bus shall be equipped with the following:

a. Adequate heating facilities.

b. A standard signaling device for giving notice that the bus is about to make a turn.

c. An alternating flashing stoplight on the rear of the bus.

d. Type-two seat belt assemblies that are compliant with all applicable regulations adopted under 49 U.S.C. § 30111 at all designated seating positions, except the State Board may adopt reasonable rules



1 modifying this requirement with respect to integrated child safety  
2 restraint systems, the transportation of students with disabilities, and  
3 the use of other federally approved restraint or securement systems  
4 where required by federal law.

5 e. Other warning devices, fire protective equipment, and first aid  
6 supplies deemed necessary by the State Board."

7 **SECTION 1.(b)** G.S. 115C-247 reads as rewritten:

8 **"§ 115C-247. Purchase of activity buses by local boards.**

9 The several local boards of education in the State are hereby authorized and empowered to  
10 take title to school buses purchased with local or community funds for the purpose of transporting  
11 pupils to and from athletic events and for other local school activity purposes, and commonly  
12 referred to as activity buses.

13 Each local board of education that operates activity buses shall adopt a policy relative to the  
14 proper use of the vehicles. The policy shall permit the use of these buses for travel to athletic  
15 events during the regular season and playoffs and for travel to other school-sponsored activities.

16 The provisions of G.S. 115C-42 shall be fully applicable to the ownership and operation of  
17 such activity school buses. Activity buses may also be used as provided in G.S. 115C-243.

18 A local board of education shall only purchase, lease, or rent activity buses equipped with  
19 type-two seat belt assemblies that are compliant with all applicable regulations adopted under 49  
20 U.S.C. § 30111 at all designated seating positions, except the local board of education may adopt  
21 reasonable policies modifying this requirement with respect to integrated child safety restraint  
22 systems, the transportation of students with disabilities, and the use of other federally approved  
23 restraint or securement systems where required by federal law."

24 **SECTION 1.(c)** G.S. 115C-218.40 reads as rewritten:

25 **"§ 115C-218.40. Charter school transportation.**

26 The charter school may provide transportation for students enrolled at the school. The charter  
27 school shall develop a transportation plan so that transportation is not a barrier to any student  
28 who resides in the local school administrative unit in which the school is located. The charter  
29 school is not required to provide transportation to any student who lives within one and one-half  
30 miles of the school. At the request of the charter school and if the local board of the local school  
31 administrative unit in which the charter school is located operates a school bus system, then that  
32 local board may contract with the charter school to provide transportation in accordance with the  
33 charter school's transportation plan to students who reside in the local school administrative unit  
34 and who reside at least one and one-half miles of the charter school. A local board may charge  
35 the charter school a reasonable charge that is sufficient to cover the cost of providing this  
36 transportation. Furthermore, a local board may refuse to provide transportation under this section  
37 if it demonstrates there is no available space on buses it intends to operate during the term of the  
38 contract or it would not be practically feasible to provide this transportation. If a charter school  
39 purchases, leases, or rents any school bus or activity bus for the purpose of providing  
40 transportation for students, the charter school shall purchase, lease, or rent vehicles equipped  
41 with type-two seat belt assemblies that are compliant with all applicable regulations adopted  
42 under 49 U.S.C. § 30111 at all designated seating positions, except the charter school may adopt  
43 reasonable policies modifying this requirement with respect to integrated child safety restraint  
44 systems, the transportation of students with disabilities, and the use of other federally approved  
45 restraint or securement systems where required by federal law."

46 **SECTION 1.(d)** G.S. 115C-238.66 is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:

47 "(23) School transportation. – If a regional school purchases, leases, or rents any  
48 school bus or activity bus for the purpose of providing transportation for  
49 students, the regional school shall purchase, lease, or rent vehicles equipped  
50 with type-two seat belt assemblies that are compliant with all applicable  
51 regulations adopted under 49 U.S.C. § 30111 at all designated seating

1 positions, except the regional school may adopt reasonable policies modifying  
2 this requirement with respect to integrated child safety restraint systems, the  
3 transportation of students with disabilities, and the use of other federally  
4 approved restraint or securement systems where required by federal law."

5 **SECTION 1.(e)** G.S. 115C-150.12C is amended by adding a new subdivision to

6 read:

7 "(39) School transportation. – If the board of trustees purchases, leases, or rents any  
8 school bus or activity bus for the purpose of providing transportation for  
9 students, the board of trustees shall purchase, lease, or rent vehicles equipped  
10 with type-two seat belt assemblies that are compliant with all applicable  
11 regulations adopted under 49 U.S.C. § 30111 at all designated seating  
12 positions, except the board of trustees may adopt reasonable policies  
13 modifying this requirement with respect to integrated child safety restraint  
14 systems, the transportation of students with disabilities, and the use of other  
15 federally approved restraint or securement systems where required by federal  
16 law."

17 **SECTION 1.(f)** Article 39 of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes is amended by  
18 adding a new section to read:

19 **"§ 115C-548.2. Transportation.**

20 If a private church school or a school of religious charter purchases, leases, or rents any school  
21 bus, as defined in federal motor vehicle safety standards, the private church school or school of  
22 religious charter shall purchase, lease, or rent buses equipped with type-two seat belt assemblies  
23 that are compliant with all applicable regulations adopted under 49 U.S.C. § 30111 at all  
24 designated seating positions, except the private church school or school of religious charter may  
25 adopt reasonable policies modifying this requirement with respect to integrated child safety  
26 restraint systems, the transportation of students with disabilities, and the use of other federally  
27 approved restraint or securement systems where required by federal law."

28 **SECTION 1.(g)** Article 39 of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes is amended by  
29 adding a new section to read:

30 **"§ 115C-566.2. Transportation.**

31 If any qualified nonpublic school purchases, leases, or rents any school bus, as defined in  
32 federal motor vehicle safety standards, the qualified nonpublic school shall purchase, lease, or  
33 rent buses equipped with type-two seat belt assemblies that are compliant with all applicable  
34 regulations adopted under 49 U.S.C. § 30111 at all designated seating positions, except the  
35 qualified nonpublic school may adopt reasonable policies modifying this requirement with  
36 respect to integrated child safety restraint systems, the transportation of students with disabilities,  
37 and the use of other federally approved restraint or securement systems where required by federal  
38 law."

39 **SECTION 1.(h)** G.S. 116-239.8(b) is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:

40 "(9a) If a laboratory school purchases, leases, or rents any school bus or activity bus  
41 for the purpose of providing transportation for students, the laboratory school  
42 shall purchase, lease, or rent vehicles equipped with type-two seat belt  
43 assemblies that are compliant with all applicable regulations adopted under 49  
44 U.S.C. § 30111 at all designated seating positions, except the laboratory  
45 school may adopt reasonable policies modifying this requirement with respect  
46 to integrated child safety restraint systems, the transportation of students with  
47 disabilities, and the use of other federally approved restraint or securement  
48 systems where required by federal law."

49 **SECTION 2.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of  
50 Public Instruction the sum of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) for the 2026-2027 fiscal year for the

1 purpose of developing policies that public school units may use to implement the requirements  
2 of this act.

3       **SECTION 3.** This act is effective when it becomes law. G.S. 115C-240(c)(2)d., as  
4 enacted by this act, applies to all contracts to purchase or lease school buses and activity buses  
5 executed after June 30, 2030. This act shall not be construed to require any educational entity to  
6 equip buses with seat belts at all designated seating positions if the buses are purchased or leased  
7 before June 30, 2030.