

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 21

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1999 Regular Session
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By: **Delegates Clagett, Cadden, Rosso, McIntosh, Sophocleus, Leopold,
Busch, and D'Amato**

Introduced and read first time: February 24, 1999

Assigned to: Rules and Executive Nominations

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION

1 A House Joint Resolution concerning

2 **Task Force to Study School Bus Safety**

3 FOR the purpose of establishing a task force to study school bus safety issues
4 including maximum seating capacity, appropriate seating and child safety
5 restraints on special needs buses, and two-way communication; providing for
6 the membership of the task force; specifying the scope of the study; requiring a
7 report of the findings and recommendations of the task force by a certain date;
8 and generally relating to school bus safety.

9 WHEREAS, The National Highway Transportation Safety Administration
10 (NHTSA) has recommended that all passengers on a school bus be seated while the
11 bus is in motion; and

12 WHEREAS, Federal regulations do not specify the number of passengers that
13 can sit on a school bus seat; and

14 WHEREAS, School bus manufacturers determine the maximum seating
15 capacity of a school bus based on seating three elementary school children on a typical
16 39 inch seat; and

17 WHEREAS, Current State regulation require loads not exceed the
18 manufacturer's rated capacity; and

19 WHEREAS, As a result of reductions in State funding many school
20 transportation supervisors have significantly altered the tolerance level between
21 eligible riders and the number of seats allotted on a school bus for a secondary school
22 trip; and

23 WHEREAS, There are many safety issues concerning school buses that should
24 be examined, including seating and child safety restraints on elementary, secondary,
25 and special needs school buses and the need for two-way communication on all school
26 buses; now, therefore, be it

27 **RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,** That there is a
28 Task Force to Study School Bus Safety; and be it further

1 RESOLVED, That the Task Force shall be composed of the following 11
2 members:

3 (1) Two members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee, to be
4 appointed by the President of the Senate, with the advice and consent of the chairman
5 of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee;

6 (2) Two members of the House Commerce and Government Matters
7 Committee, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates, with the advice
8 and consent of the chairman of the House Commerce and Government Matters
9 Committee;

10 (3) One employee of the State Department of Education, appointed by
11 the State Superintendent of Public Schools;

12 (4) Two representatives of the Maryland Congress of Parents and
13 Teachers, Inc. (Maryland PTA), appointed by the President of the Maryland PTA;

14 (5) One member of the Maryland Association of Pupil Transportation
15 Supervisors, appointed by the president of the Association;

16 (6) One member of the Association of School Bus Operators, appointed by
17 the president of the Association; and

18 (7) Two officers from a local government in the State, representing
19 urban traffic and safety divisions of the local government, to be appointed by the
20 Governor; and be it further

21 RESOLVED, That the Task Force shall review, study, and report on:

22 (1) The number of school buses used by a county board and by the New
23 Board of School Commissioners of Baltimore City to transport middle and high school
24 students, the manufacturer's rated seating capacity of each bus, and the number of
25 middle school and high school students on each bus during the course of the previous
26 school year;

27 (2) The seating capacity of school buses, taking into account the
28 differences in average sizes of pupils in elementary and secondary schools;

29 (3) The manner of seating children and the use of child safety restraints
30 on buses for children with special needs;

31 (4) The number of school buses being operated in each county and in
32 Baltimore City that have two-way communications; and

33 (5) Any other issue that the Task Force deems pertinent in relation to
34 school bus safety; and be it further

35 RESOLVED, That on or before December 1, 1999, the Task Force shall issue a
36 report of its findings and its recommendations to the Governor and, in accordance

1 with § 2-1246 of the State Government Article, to the Senate Judicial Proceedings
2 Committee and the House Commerce and Government Matters Committee; and be it
3 further

4 RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be forwarded by the Department of
5 Legislative Services to the Honorable Parris N. Glendening, Governor of Maryland;
6 the Honorable Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr., President of the Senate of Maryland; and
7 the Honorable Casper R. Taylor, Jr., Speaker of the House of Delegates.