

Department of Legislative Services

Maryland General Assembly

2001 Session

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 1086 (Delegate Mandel, *et al.*)

Commerce and Government Matters

Transportation - School Vehicles - Safety Standards

This bill requires a vehicle that regularly transports children under the age of 18 to or from school, a school-related activity, a child care center, or a civic, educational, or recreational activity, including a day or summer camp, to conform to federal school bus safety standards. The bill does not prohibit: (1) a State or local human services provider or public transportation authority from transporting a child accompanied by a parent who is traveling in connection with employment, education, or training; or (2) a child from being transported in a vehicle designed to carry 30 or more passengers. If a vehicle that does not comply with federal school bus safety standards is used for school-related transportation prior to October 1, 2001, the vehicle may be used until October 1, 2006. With the advice of the Maryland State Department of Education, the Motor Vehicle Administration must adopt regulations to carry out the bill's provisions.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Any additional responsibilities designated for the Maryland State Department of Education and the Maryland Department of Transportation could be met with existing resources.

Local Effect: Potential minimal increase in local school expenditures for student transportation.

Small Business Effect: Potential meaningful.

Analysis

Current Law: A multi-purpose or passenger vehicle may be used to transport students to and from school or school events if: (i) it is designed for 15 or fewer persons; (ii) students are only permitted to enter and exit the vehicle at designated areas; and (iii) the vehicle is equipped with the proper seat belts or safety seats. Vehicles used to transport children under the age of 18 to or from a civic, educational, or recreational activity, including a day or summer camp, are not subject to standards set for public school buses.

Local Fiscal Effect: Most local school systems use only school buses that comply with federal safety standards. Some systems allow the use of county-owned or privately-owned cars for certain activities or in certain situations and a couple systems use school vans to transport some students. It is assumed that these practices could be phased out over five years with only minimal costs to a few local school systems.

Small Business Effect: Small businesses operating child care centers, day camps, and summer camps would be required to utilize transportation vehicles that conform to federal school bus safety standards by no later than October 2006. The costs for buses that comply with federal standards could be significantly higher than the cost of vehicles currently used by some small businesses.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland State Department of Education, Department of Legislative Services

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