Overview

This bill deals with installation and use of seat belts and seat and shoulder belts on school buses. It authorizes school districts to purchase buses with seat belts or seat and shoulder belts and provides that school bus owners and drivers would not be liable for seat belt non-use but would be liable for maintaining equipment.

Section

1 Training. Requires school districts to train students in the use of seat belts or seat and shoulder belts.

2 Model training program. Requires the department of public safety's model school bus safety training program to include information on use of seat belts or seat and lap belts.

3 Parental notification. Requires a school board that adopts a policy that requires use of seat belts on school buses to notify each student's parent or guardian of the policy and its training procedure.

4 Seat belts allowed. Allows school buses to be equipped with seat belts or seat and shoulder belts meeting standards adopted by the department of public safety. Provides that department standards are not subject to the administrative procedure act. Exempts school buses specially equipped to transport disabled students. Requires passengers on a school bus equipped with seat belts or seat and shoulder belts to use the belts provided, unless the passenger or the passenger's parent or guardian has notified the school district in writing that the passenger does not intend to use the belts.

No school district, bus operator, or employee or volunteer is liable because a bus passenger was injured when not wearing a safety belt. No immunity is provided for failure to:

(1) maintain in operating order equipment required by law, rule, or district policy; or
(2) comply with applicable statute, rule or district policy.

In a civil action, none of the above parties is liable for failing to assist a child with using a safety belt.

5 **Seat backs.** Requires all school buses manufactured after 1999 with seat belts or seat and shoulder belts to have a minimum seat back height of 28 inches.

6 **Bus length.** Allows a school bus to be up to 45 feet long.

7 **Effective date.** Immediate.