



Press Release

Annual NASDPTS Survey Highlights Danger of Passing School Buses

July 24, 2019

Indianapolis, Indiana- Today, the national association representing state directors of pupil transportation released the results of its ninth annual survey on illegal passing of school buses. In 39 states throughout the country over 27 percent of the nation's school bus drivers participated in a one-day survey to report motorists who passed their stopped school buses. In the survey, 130,963 school bus drivers reported that 95,319 vehicles passed their buses illegally on a single day during the 2018-19 school year. Throughout a 180-day school year, these sample results point to more than 17 million violations among America's motoring public. The number of incidents is likely far greater, since not all school bus drivers participated in the voluntary survey.

"To amplify the shocking results from this school year was the fact that over a six day period from October 26, 2018 through November 1, 2018 six students were killed, and eight students and two adults were injured by vehicles either violating school bus stop arms or hitting students and adults while they were waiting at a bus stop," said Mike LaRocco, President of the National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services. These incidents occurred in Georgia, Indiana Florida, Mississippi, and Pennsylvania. "Despite the fact that students are much safer being transported to and from school in a school bus, students and adults at the bus stop are still very much at the mercy of inattentive motorists. The sheer volume of these illegal passing incidents in a day, let alone an entire school year, is tragic and sobering, particularly when you consider that these injuries and deaths are easily preventable," added LaRocco. "I believe we need to get motorists to understand that, although their vehicles may be necessary in the function of their daily lives, they are also two-ton weapons in the hands of drivers who are not paying attention to the world around them as they drive our nation's roads."

The results of the surveys, conducted annually since 2011, have been unfortunately consistent. The survey results have brought needed attention among state and federal policy makers to the need for greater safety countermeasures. In recent years, several states have increased penalties for violations, authorized the use of photo evidence for issuing citations, or enacted other measures designed to deter this dangerous practice.

This month, NASDPTS joined the National School Transportation Association and the National Association for Pupil Transportation in expressing support for the STOP for School Buses Act of 2019 (H.R.2218/S.1254), introduced in the House by Congresswomen Jackie Walorski (R-IN) and Julia Brownley (D-CA), and in the Senate by Senators Todd Young (R-IN) and Gary Peters (D-MI). This bipartisan legislation calls upon the US Department of Transportation to undertake a comprehensive review of all issues involved with illegal passing of school buses and make recommendations to Congress on best practices to deal with this pervasive, national safety problem.

As the new school year ramps up throughout the country, the National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services encourages state directors, local school districts, law enforcement agencies, legislators, and America's motoring public to redouble their efforts to reduce the ongoing threat to the safety of students posed by distracted driving and illegal passing of school buses.

Complete information on the project, including the detailed results from the 2019 survey and prior years, can be found at www.nasdpts.org/stoparm or by contacting NASDPTS Executive Director, Charlie Hood (ExecDir@nasdpts.org).

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