MISSISSIPPI LEGISLATURE REGULAR SESSION 2021

By: Representative Gibbs (72nd)

To: Education;
Appropriations

HOUSE BILL NO. 656

AN ACT TO REQUIRE EACH SCHOOL BUS PURCHASED BY A LOCAL SCHOOL BOARD AND CHARTER SCHOOL AFTER JULY 1, 2021, TO BE EQUIPPED WITH SEAT BELTS AT ALL SEATING POSITIONS; TO AMEND SECTION 37-41-1, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO DIRECT THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO PROMULGATE RULES REGARDING THE TYPES AND USE OF SEAT BELTS; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

SECTION 1. Each school bus purchased by a local school board or charter school under the authority granted by Section 37-41-81 after July 1, 2021, shall be equipped with seat belts at all seating positions. No bus in operation before July 1, 2021, shall be required to be retrofitted with seat belts, but nothing in this section shall prohibit a local school board or charter school from installing them on such buses.

SECTION 2. Section 37-41-1, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:

37-41-1. The State Board of Education is authorized, empowered and directed to promulgate rules and regulations relating to the transportation of students enrolled in the public schools *** * ***, including rules and regulations for:

(a) Setting standards for public school district and charter school bus routes;

(b) Setting standards for public school district and charter school buses, including standards for types and use of seat belts;

(c) Setting standards for public school district bus drivers;

(d) Formulating procedure for selecting public school district bus drivers;

(e) Formulating courses of training for public school district and charter school bus drivers and mechanics, and assist in administering and financing such courses;

(f) Providing operation procedure for public school district and charter school buses to * * * ensure safety of pupils;

(g) Formulating specifications for use in purchasing public school district buses; getting bids on public school district buses; equipment and supplies; and fixing prices based upon said bids which school districts may not exceed in purchasing said equipment;

(h) Formulating specifications for use by school districts in purchasing used school buses; and

(i) Providing a system of records and reports for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of Sections 37-41-1 through

37-41-51, and providing the superintendent of schools with a sufficient supply of report forms.

All rules and regulations adopted and promulgated by the State Board of Education relating to school district and charter school bus drivers shall also be applicable to drivers of privately owned buses transporting public school district children.

All rules and regulations adopted and promulgated by the State Board of Education pursuant to the authority conferred by this section shall be spread at large upon the minutes of the State Board of Education and copies thereof shall be furnished to all school boards and governing boards of charter schools not less than thirty (30) days prior to the effective date of such rules and regulations.

The provisions of this chapter are applicable to school districts, charter schools and the transportation of students enrolled in public schools *** * ***. *** * ***

SECTION 3. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2021.

ST: School buses; require those purchased after July 1, 2021, to be equipped with seat belts.