



**School Transportation Association of Massachusetts
76 North Bedford Street - East Bridgewater, MA 02333**

**President
DARLENE REIPOLD
F. M. Kuzmeskus, Inc.**

Dear School Bus Contractors:

It seems lately that we are always sending notices to everyone stating: "THE SKY IS FALLING." Well, fellow bus contractors, it could be! There are several amendments in the house at this time that **will** eliminate any mandate to transport students to any school no matter how far someone may live from the school or how young a student may be. This includes municipal schools and regional school districts. There are also amendments that will allow the school committees to charge a fee regardless of where the children live; provided, however that no student eligible for free or reduced lunch will be required to pay such a fee.

Our biggest concern is with the elimination of the mandate to transport students. The amendments can be found on Budget page 154, 156, 159 and 431 presented by Mr. Jones of North Reading, Ms. Rogeness of Longmeadow, Mr. Peterson of Grafton, Mr. Lepper of Attleboro, and Mr. DeMacedo of Plymouth.

These amendments are getting **VERY SERIOUS ATTENTION**, and if we, as contractors, do not speak up, no one else will. PLEASE, contact your representatives AS SOON AS POSSIBLE and ask them **NOT** to support these amendments.

Ladies and Gentlemen, our biggest fear is, if we loose this mandate, we will probably never get it back. Do not sit back and think that 'my' school district will never eliminate school bus transportation. Many districts will be seriously considering the elimination of bus transportation.

Enclosed is a copy of the STAM Position Paper that has been sent to all the state representatives. Please read it so you can use it as a guideline. If you are not aware who your representative is, you can call the STAM office and Lyn Peterson can give you their name, telephone number, and address. These amendments are going to be heard within the next few days, so do not hesitate to contact your representatives now.

Sincerely,

Darlene A. Reipold, President
STAM

**Managing Director
LYNELL J. PETERSON
508-378-0440**

Internet Site: <http://www.schoolbus.org>

**MA Only: 1.800.368.0440
E-mail: stam@schoolbus.org
Fax: 508.378.8970**

**Legal Counsel
ALLEN J. McCARTHY
671-523-6200**

**Affiliated with The National School Transportation Association
Affiliated with The Massachusetts Association of School Committees**





School Transportation Association of Massachusetts
76 North Bedford Street - East Bridgewater, MA 02333

President
DARLENE REIPOLD
F. M. Kuzmeskus, Inc.

School Transportation Association of Massachusetts

A statewide association of independent school bus companies

The Necessity for Specific Appropriation of Funds for Transportation

The current proposed budget of Governor Mitt Romney seriously threatens the future of school bus transportation, a vital service to our cities and towns. Under Governor Romney's proposed budget, funds for the reimbursement to cities and towns for the costs of transportation for schoolchildren would no longer be appropriated separately. Instead, funds would be pooled into the general funds under M.G.L. c. 70. While this measure would not technically eliminate the funds, it would remove the funds' specific designation as reimbursement for school transportation costs. Clearly, if such a proposal were accepted, it would result in cities and towns reducing and/or eliminating funding for local school transportation. Such actions would lead to the reduction of the number of children being transported by school bus, and of the number of school buses being operated. These reductions would result in serious safety, environmental, and economic ramifications for our communities.

Safety

- School bus transportation is one of the safest forms of transportation in the U.S.
- Between 1987 and 1998, the number of school-aged children killed in passenger cars on a weekday during school hours compared to children killed while riding a school bus during the same hours was 80 to 1.
- Nationwide, there are fewer than 10 school bus passenger fatalities each year. These tragedies typically involve unavoidable, severe circumstances. This is a very minimal risk when compared with the more than 600 school-aged children who are killed each year in passenger cars or other private vehicles during school hours. *Most of these deaths could be prevented if children rode in today's ultra-safe school buses.*
- If there are fewer school buses, more children will be riding in cars.
- More children will be walking to and from school each day, and with the winter we just experienced, this would be extremely dangerous.

Managing Director
LYNELL J. PETERSON
508.378.0440

(Page 1 of 2)

MA Only: 1.800.368.0440

Legal Counsel
ALLEN J. McCARTHY
671-523-6200

Internet Site: <http://www.schoolbus.org>

E-mail: stam@schoolbus.org

Affiliated with The National School Transportation Association
Affiliated with The Massachusetts Association of School Committees
Fax: 508.378.8970



School Transportation Association of Massachusetts

A statewide association of independent school bus companies

The Necessity for Specific Appropriation of Funds for Transportation

- Page 2 -

Environmental

- For every school bus reduction, an additional 20 motor vehicles transporting students to and from school twice a day are added to the road.
- These 20 additional motor vehicles would result in **SIX TIMES more hydrocarbons and FOUR TIMES more carbon monoxide emissions**. This would equal to **15,441 more tons hydrocarbons and 105,903 more tons carbon monoxide emissions per year for the total number of school buses replaced by motor vehicles in the state.**

Economic

- The state has approximately 9,000 registered school buses.
- The average excise tax paid to cities and town within the Commonwealth for each of these 9,000 buses is \$264.00 per year. Therefore, the annual income for towns and cities from the excise tax is approximately \$2,376,000.00.
- The average school bus uses 12 gallons of fuel per day. The Commonwealth's 9,000 school buses burn 108,000 gallons per day, or 19,440,000 gallons per year. At 21 cents per gallon, the state receives \$4,082,400.00 dollars per year in fuel taxes.
- Close to 9,000 people are hired to operate these school buses on a daily basis. A lay-off of these people would result in economic hardship.
- The average school bus contractor pays \$206.50 per bus to outside businesses for repairs. This results in an annual amount of approximately \$10,125,000.00.

As seen above, a reduction in the number of school buses transporting children and the reduction in the number of schoolchildren being transported by buses has a significant impact on several aspects of our society.

By specifically appropriating and earmarking funds for transportation, we can ensure that our schoolchildren will continue to be safely transported to and from schools and that our cities and towns will not be forced to make reductions in this critically important area.