

Senate Bill 415

By: Senators Brush of the 24th, Thomas of the 10th and Cable of the 27th

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Article 22 of Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated,
2 relating to school buses, so as to provide for mandatory training of school bus drivers; to
3 provide for a short title; to provide for policies and procedures regarding the operation of
4 school buses; to require school buses to adhere to published times; to amend Title 40 of the
5 Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to motor vehicles and traffic, so as to change
6 the equipment required on school buses; to provide for certain procedures to be followed by
7 school bus drivers; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other
8 purposes.

9 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

10 **SECTION 1.**

11 This Act shall be known and may be cited as "Aleana's Law."

12 **SECTION 2.**

13 Article 22 of Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to
14 school buses, is amended by adding a new Part 5 to read as follows:

15 *"Part 5*

16 20-2-1125.

17 All persons employed as school bus drivers by any public school system in this state shall
18 receive annual mandatory training on traffic laws pertaining to the operation of school
19 buses and on school bus operations and safety. The State Board of Education shall
20 establish the content and length of such training and shall determine the qualifications of
21 and certify the instructors who conduct such training. No person employed as school bus
22 drivers by any public school system in this state shall operate a school bus unless such
23 person has completed such training within the preceding 12 month period.

1 20-2-1126.

2 (a) Each public school system in this state shall promulgate policies and procedures for the
3 operation of school buses and the conduct and safety of those students who ride such buses.
4 Such policies and procedures shall be in writing and available for public inspection. Each
5 person employed as a school bus driver shall acknowledge in writing that he or she has
6 received a copy of and has read and understands such policies and procedures prior to the
7 beginning of each school year. In the event that such policies and procedures are amended
8 during the school year, such amended policies and procedures shall be provided to all
9 persons employed by the school system as school bus drivers and, each such person shall
10 acknowledge in writing that he or she has received a copy of and has read and understands
11 such amended policies and procedures.

12 (b) At the beginning of each school year, each public school system in this state shall
13 provide each of its students with a copy of the school bus policies and procedures and, in
14 the event such policies and procedures are amended during the school year, shall provide
15 copies of such amendments to the students. The receipt of such policies and procedures
16 shall be acknowledged in writing by a parent or guardian of each student.

17 20-2-1127.

18 Each public school system in this state shall publish a schedule of school bus routes which
19 shall contain the approximate times at which the school buses will be at each stop on such
20 route. Except in circumstances constituting an emergency, by which is meant unforeseen
21 circumstances imposing a threat to life or property, school buses shall not depart a stop in
22 advance of the time scheduled when picking up students and shall not discharge students
23 at a stop prior to the time scheduled. The parent or guardian of each student shall be given
24 a written copy of the bus route applicable to that student at the beginning of each school
25 year and any amendments or changes to the times and locations of such route shall be
26 provided to the parent or guardian of each affected student prior to the effective date of
27 such changes."

28 **SECTION 3.**

29 Title 40 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to motor vehicles and traffic, is
30 amended by adding a new Code Section 40-6-165 to read as follows:

31 "40-6-165.

32 (a) Prior to moving a school bus from a stop at which passengers have been loaded or
33 unloaded, the driver of the bus shall check all mirrors to ensure that it is safe to place the
34 bus in motion.

1 (b) Prior to loading or unloading passengers from a school bus, the driver shall engage the
 2 parking brakes of the bus and shall not release such brakes until each passenger boarding
 3 the bus is on board and until each passenger disembarking from the bus is off the roadway
 4 and safely on the pedestrian areas of the roadway.

5 (c) Prior to loading or unloading passengers from a school bus, the driver shall display the
 6 stop arm on the bus and shall not retract the stop arm until each passenger boarding the bus
 7 is on board and until each passenger disembarking from the bus is off the roadway and
 8 safely on the pedestrian areas of the roadway.

9 (d) The driver of a school bus shall open his or her window and turn off any noisy
 10 unnecessary equipment at each stop to listen for any emergencies or distress situations.

11 (e) The driver of a school bus shall not use or operate a cellular telephone or two-way
 12 radio while loading or unloading passengers.

13 (f) The driver of a school bus shall not use or operate a cellular telephone while the bus
 14 is in motion.

15 (g) The driver of a school bus shall ensure that all passengers exiting the bus who desire
 16 to cross the roadway cross in front of the bus only.

17 (h) The driver of a school bus shall ensure that the red flasher lights on the bus remain
 18 illuminated and flashing until all passengers have boarded or have exited the bus and have
 19 safely crossed the roadway and are safely on the pedestrian areas of the roadway.

20 (i) The driver of a school bus shall extend the extension arm or gate on the front of the bus
 21 until all passengers have boarded or have exited the bus and have safely crossed the
 22 roadway and are safely on the pedestrian areas of the roadway.

23 (j) Any person willfully violating this Code section shall be guilty of a misdemeanor."

24 **SECTION 4.**

25 Said title is further amended by striking Code Section 40-8-111, relating to school bus
 26 equipment generally, and inserting in lieu thereof a new Code Section 40-8-111 to read as
 27 follows:

28 "40-8-111.

29 (a) Every bus used for the transportation of school children shall be equipped as follows:

30 (1) There shall be an emergency door located either at the rear of the body or at the side
 31 of the body opposite from the side on which the students normally board, so as to provide
 32 an emergency exit. The emergency door shall be operative from both the interior and
 33 exterior of the bus at all times;

34 (2) The driver's seat shall be equipped with a seat belt which shall be fastened so as to
 35 secure the driver in his seat at all times when children are being transported on the bus;

1 (3) Combination clearance and marker lights shall be installed at each of the four roof
2 corners. The two such lights on the front of the vehicle shall be amber in color, and the
3 two such lights on the rear of the vehicle shall be red in color. A cluster of three lights
4 shall be mounted between the clearance and marker lights in the front and in the rear of
5 the bus at the roof line thereof;

6 (4) The body of the bus shall be equipped with four hooded or recessed red flasher lights.
7 Such lights shall be at least 5 3/4 inches in diameter, sealed beam, and must flash when
8 the bus is stopped to receive or discharge passengers. Two such lights shall be mounted
9 in the front of the body above the windshield, and two such lights shall be mounted on
10 the rear of the body above the rear windows;

11 (5) There shall be installed on the left outer side of the body a stop arm to give notice to
12 drivers of other vehicles that the bus is making a stop. The requirement for a stop arm
13 may be waived by the State Board of Education in the event a more effective warning
14 device is prescribed;

15 (6) The exhaust system of the bus shall carry exhaust gases from the engine to a
16 discharge point into the atmosphere, which point:

17 (A) Shall extend beyond the rear axle and shall extend at least five inches beyond the
18 chassis frame and be mounted outside the chassis rail at end point; or

19 (B) May extend to, but not beyond, the body limits on the left side of the bus, beyond
20 the driver's compartment outboard of the chassis centerline;

21 (7) All floor joints of the bus shall be gas tight and constructed so as to prevent the entry
22 of engine exhaust gases into the passenger compartment. Any opening or separation of
23 joints in the floor shall be repaired before the bus is used for the transportation of
24 children; and

25 (8) There shall be installed an outside roof mounted white flashing strobe light with clear
26 lens emitting light 360 degrees around its vertical axis. Such strobe light shall be no
27 greater than one-third the distance from the rear of the bus to the front of the bus and shall
28 flash when the bus is stopped to receive or discharge passengers. Local boards of
29 education shall be authorized, in their discretion, to require such strobe lights on buses
30 carrying special education passengers;

31 (9) There shall be installed cross-over mirrors on each bus which shall be adjusted such
32 that the driver may view the front and both sides of the bus from the driver's seat;

33 (10) There shall be installed functioning parking brakes on each bus; and

34 (11) There shall be installed an extension arm or gate on the front of each bus which may
35 be activated by the driver to prevent passengers from crossing immediately in front of the
36 bus.

1 (b) Each public school system shall be required to maintain in good working condition all
2 safety equipment required under subsection (a) of this Code section.
3 ~~(b)~~(c) Nothing in subsection (a) of this Code section shall apply to motor vehicles operated
4 by a local transit system which transport school children to and from school on regular or
5 scheduled routes of a transit vehicle with regular fare-paying passengers."

6 **SECTION 5.**

7 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.