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REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES )  
*Third Regular Session* )

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**SENATE**

**S. No. 2958**

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**Introduced by Senator Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada**

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**AN ACT  
PRESCRIBING SCHOOL BUS SAFETY STANDARDS AND FOR OTHER  
PURPOSES**

**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

In a country where road congestion has become a daily struggle, according to the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), there has been a significant increase in road traffic accidents, injuries, and deaths over the past few years. The lack of regulated safety standards for school buses and drivers exposes students to unnecessary risks, jeopardizing their well-being.

This measure addresses these challenges by mandating stricter safety protocols, such as driver training and the mandatory installation of seat belts, ensuring that school transportation is secure and reliable. It also seeks to institutionalize safety as a non-negotiable component of school bus operations and emphasizes compliance with modern vehicle safety standards and introduces accountability for transport providers, prioritizing child welfare and aligning with global standards on road safety.

The bill not only seeks to protect students from unsafe school bus, but also aims to foster public trust in school transportation services, ensuring that parents and guardians can entrust their children's safety without hesitation.

This initiative reflects the government's unwavering commitment in creating safer educational environments and promoting sustainable development. The safety and security of our students are not just priorities but are foundational to our national progress. By ensuring that our students are protected during their daily commute, we are investing in the future of our nation. Safe and secure educational environments foster better learning conditions, which in turn produce well-rounded and educated citizens who will drive our country's development forward.

In this light, the immediate passage of this bill is highly recommended.



**JINGGOY EJERCITO ESTRADA**

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**PURPOSES**

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:*

1 Section 1. *Short Title*- This Act shall be known as the "*School Bus Safety Act*".

2 Sec. 2. *Declaration of Policy* - It is hereby declared the policy of the State to  
3 promote safety in order to protect passengers of school buses from injury in case of  
4 accidents.

5 Sec. 3. *Definition of Terms*- For purposes of this Act the terms:

6 a) *Bus* means a motor vehicle, except a trailer, designed for carrying more than  
7 ten (10) persons;

8 b) *School Bus* means a bus that is used for purposes that include carrying  
9 students to and from public or private school or school-related events on a  
10 regular basis, but does not include a transit bus or a school-chartered bus;

11 c) *School-Chartered Bus* means a bus that is operated under a short-term  
12 contract with the school authorities who have acquired exclusive use of the  
13 bus at a fixed charge in order to provide transportation for a group of pupils  
14 to a special school related event; and

15 d) *Seats Belts* refer to the combined lap belt and shoulder strap that fasten a  
16 rider to moving vehicle and prevent the rider from being thrown out or against  
17 the interior of the vehicle during sudden stops.

1           *Sec. 4. Proficiency Standards for School Bus Drivers. -*

2           a) Requirement- Not later than one (1) year after the date of enactment of this  
3           Act, the Department of Transportation shall prescribe proficiency standards for  
4           school bus drivers who are required to possess a professional license to operate  
5           a school bus.

6           b) Demonstration of Proficiency- Upon the prescription of standards under  
7           subsection (a), each school bus driver referred to in subsection (a) shall  
8           demonstrate (at such interval as the Department of Transportation shall  
9           prescribe) to the employer of the driver, the school, the licensing agency, or  
10          other person or agency responsible for regulating school bus drivers the  
11          proficiency of such driver in operating a school bus in accordance with the  
12          proficiency standards prescribed under subsection (a) or the proficiency  
13          standards established by the State concerned, as the case may be.

14          *Sec. 5. Seat Belts in School Buses. -*

15          a) Requirement for Installation- Not later than one (1) year after the date of the  
16          enactment of this Act, the Department of Transportation shall prescribe regulations  
17          requiring driver seat belts and passenger seat belts (including lap safety belts or other  
18          child safety devices meeting applicable government safety standards) for each seating  
19          position in any newly manufactured school bus. Owners of school buses which are not  
20          currently equipped with seat belts shall be given a period of six (6) months from the  
21          publication of the regulations of this Act to install the necessary seat belts in their  
22          school buses,

23          b) Promotion of Seat Belt Usage-

24                  1) In General- The Department of Transportation, in consultation with  
25          appropriate safety organizations and parent-teacher organizations, shall conduct a  
26          program to promote and encourage the use of seat belts in school buses.

27                  2) Elements of Program- In conducting the program required under this  
28          subsection, the Department of Transportation shall:

29                          i.       Encourage the local governments to monitor the mandatory usage of  
30                          seat belts in school buses;

31                          ii.       Develop and disseminate educational materials on the importance of  
32                          using seat belts to passengers and drivers of school buses; and

1           iii.       Recognize schools that achieve a high level of seat belt usage by  
2           passengers and drivers of school buses.

3           Sec. 6. *Registration* - No school bus shall be allowed to be registered unless it is  
4           equipped with the necessary seat belts.

5           Sec. 7. *Implementing Authority* - The Department of Transportation shall be  
6           primarily responsible for the enforcement of the provisions of this Act. For this  
7           purpose, the Department of Transportation, in consultation with relevant government  
8           agencies and private citizens organizations and stakeholders, shall issue within ninety  
9           (90) days from the effectivity of this Act the relevant implementing rules and  
10          regulations.

11          Sec. 8. *Separability Clause*. – If any part, section or provision of this Act is  
12          declared invalid or unconstitutional, the sections or provisions which are not affected  
13          shall remain valid and subsisting.

14          Sec. 9. *Repealing Clause*. – All laws, decrees, executive orders, ordinances,  
15          rules, regulations, other issuances or parts thereof, which are inconsistent with this  
16          Act, are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

17          Sec. 10. *Effectivity*. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its  
18          complete publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

*Approved,*