

1 **State of Arkansas**
2 **80th General Assembly**
3 **Regular Session, 1995**

A Bill

ACT 805 OF 1995
SENATE BILL 601

4 **By: Senator Smith**
5 ***By: Representative Wren***

For An Act To Be Entitled

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9 "AN ACT TO PROVIDE INCREASED SAFEGUARDS AND PROTECTION FOR
10 ARKANSAS SCHOOL CHILDREN ABOARD PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SCHOOL
11 TRANSPORTATION; TO DECLARE AN EMERGENCY; AND FOR OTHER
12 PURPOSES."

Subtitle

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15 "THE SCHOOL BUS SAFETY ACT OF 1995."

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17 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

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19 SECTION 1. As used in this act, "school bus" means every motor vehicle
20 owned by a public school district or a private school or a governmental agency
21 and operated for the transportation of children to or from school or
22 school-sponsored activities.

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24 SECTION 2. (a) *On and after the effective date of this act, any new*
25 *school bus* whose function involves the loading or discharge of school children
26 as passengers shall be equipped with a flashing white strobe light in order to
27 provide greater visibility to drivers in approaching vehicles. Such strobe
28 light shall be in addition to those flasher lights required under Ark. Code
29 § 27-51-1002.

30 (b) *On and after the effective date of this act, any new school bus*
31 *whose function involves the loading or discharge of school children as*
32 *passengers on a regular route* shall be equipped with an electric, air, or
33 *hydraulic-operated* crossing gate in order to prevent school children from
34 crossing in front of the bus in such a way that the bus driver is unlikely to
35 see them.

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1 (c) On and after July 1, 1997, all other school buses shall be
2 retrofitted with a flashing white strobe light and an electric, air, or
3 hydraulic-operated crossing gate for purposes as described in this section.
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5 SECTION 3. (a) Prior to the 1997 Regular Session of the Arkansas
6 General Assembly, each local school district shall submit a proposal to the
7 State Department of Education for funding cameras and camera boxes on each
8 school bus.

9 (b) The Administrator of the Office of Driver Services of the Revenue
10 Division of the Department of Finance and Administration shall prepare
11 legislation for consideration prior to the 1997 Regular Session to require a
12 specific commercial driver's license for school bus drivers.

13 (c) The Director of the General Education Division of the Department of
14 Education shall cause to be publicized the first week of each school year as
15 School Bus Safety Week.
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17 SECTION 4. (a) A person commits school bus piracy if, without lawful
18 authority, he possesses a deadly weapon as defined in § 5-1-102(4) and seizes
19 or exercises control of a school bus and the vehicle is occupied by one or
20 more unconsenting persons.

21 (b) School bus piracy is a Class A felony.
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23 SECTION 5. All provisions of this act of a general and permanent nature
24 are amendatory to the Arkansas Code of 1987 Annotated and the Arkansas Code
25 Revision Commission shall incorporate the same in the Code.
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27 SECTION 6. If any provision of this act or the application thereof to
28 any person or circumstance is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect
29 other provisions or applications of the act which can be given effect without
30 the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions of this
31 act are declared to be severable.
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33 SECTION 7. All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this act are
34 hereby repealed.
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1 SECTION 8. EMERGENCY. It is hereby found and determined by the General
2 Assembly of the State of Arkansas that the safety of thousands of children who
3 ride school buses to and from school and school-related activities is largely
4 dependent upon motorists being alerted to the presence of the school bus and
5 that recent research indicates the use of flashing white strobe lights on
6 school buses will contribute significantly to warning motorists of a need for
7 caution; that electric crossing gates will provide greater visibility to a bus
8 driver who can better see students crossing in front of the school bus; that
9 recent incidents where armed individuals have stopped and boarded school buses
10 for the purpose of robbing and terrorizing children on the bus are reflective
11 of a rise in juvenile crime throughout Arkansas and that the immediate
12 implementation of this act is necessary to better address the safety of all
13 school children. Therefore, an emergency is hereby declared to exist and this
14 act being necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace,
15 health, and safety, shall be in full force and effect from and after its
16 passage and approval.

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/s/Smith

APPROVED: 3-28-95

As Engrossed: 3/2/95 3/7/95 3/10/95

SB 601

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