

1 State of Arkansas  
2 80th General Assembly  
3 Regular Session, 1995  
4 By: Senator Smith  
5 By: Representative Wren  
6  
7

# A Bill

SENATE BILL 601

## For An Act To Be Entitled

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."  
13

## Subtitle

14 "THE SCHOOL BUS SAFETY ACT OF 1995."  
15  
16

17 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:  
18

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  
21 agency and operated for the transportation of children to or from school or  
22 school-sponsored activities.  
23

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  
26 children as passengers shall be equipped with a flashing white strobe light  
27 in order to provide greater visibility to drivers in approaching vehicles.  
28 Such strobe light shall be in addition to those flasher lights required under  
29 Ark. Code § 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.

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35

*(c) On and after July 1, 1997, all other school buses shall be retrofitted with a flashing white strobe light and an electric, air, or hydraulic-operated crossing gate for purposes as described in this section.*

*SECTION 3. (a) Prior to the 1997 Regular Session of the Arkansas General Assembly, each local school district shall submit a proposal to the State Department of Education for funding cameras and camera boxes on each school bus.*

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

*(c) The Director of the General Education Division of the Department of Education shall cause to be publicized the first week of each school year as School Bus Safety Week.*

*SECTION 4. (a) A person commits school bus piracy if, without lawful authority, he possesses a deadly weapon as defined in § 5-1-102(4) and seizes or exercises control of a school bus and the vehicle is occupied by one or more unconsenting persons.*

*(b) School bus piracy is a Class A felony.*

*SECTION 5. All provisions of this act of a general and permanent nature are amendatory to the Arkansas Code of 1987 Annotated and the Arkansas Code Revision Commission shall incorporate the same in the Code.*

*SECTION 6. If any provision of this act or the application thereof to any person or circumstance is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect other provisions or applications of the act which can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions of this act are declared to be severable.*

*SECTION 7. All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this act are hereby repealed.*

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35

SECTION 8. EMERGENCY. It is hereby found and determined by the General Assembly of the State of Arkansas that the safety of thousands of children who ride school buses to and from school and school-related activities is largely dependent upon motorists being alerted to the presence of the school bus and that recent research indicates the use of flashing white strobe lights on school buses will contribute significantly to warning motorists of a need for caution; that electric crossing gates will provide greater visibility to a bus driver who can better see students crossing in front of the school bus; that recent incidents where armed individuals have stopped and boarded school buses for the purpose of robbing and terrorizing children on the bus are reflective of a rise in juvenile crime throughout Arkansas and that the immediate implementation of this act is necessary to better address the safety of all school children. Therefore, an emergency is hereby declared to exist and this act being necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, and safety, shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage and approval.

*/s/Smith*

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

**SB 601**

1

2

**0224950917.jjd590**