



This publication is a member service of
National School

Transportation Association
113 South West Street, 4th Floor
Alexandria, VA 22314
Phone: (703) 684-3200
Fax: (703) 684-3212
E-mail: info@yellowbuses.org
Website: www.yellowbuses.org

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The National School Transportation Association (NSTA) was founded in 1964 by school bus contractors to "promote and foster the highest degree of safety in the transportation of school children"



National School Bus Safety Week Resolution

Congressman John J. "Jimmy" Duncan (R-TN) introduced House Resolution 498 honoring School Bus Safety Week on October 18, 2005.

The Resolution honors the goals and ideals of School Bus Safety Week and the safety of school bus transportation.

Current co-sponsors to the Resolution include: Representatives Randy Kuhl (R-NY), Fred Upton (R-MI), John Boozman (R-AR), Sue Kelly (R-NY), Michael McNulty (R-NY), Tom Petri (R-WI), Mark Udall (D-CO), Stephanie Herseth (D-SD), Carolyn McCarthy (D-NY) and Donald Payne (D-NJ).

Please contact your Member of Congress and ask that they join onto the bill as a co-sponsor. In order for the Committee to act upon the Resolution we must have at least 50 co-sponsors, so your assistance in this effort is very important. As this is only a House effort, there is no need to contact your Senators about this Resolution.

To locate the phone number for your Representative, please go to the Legislative Action Center on the NSTA website at www.yellowbuses.org.

Estate Tax Repeal Negotiations Continue

Senate Republicans are hopeful to bring an estate tax repeal bill to the Senate Floor this year, but advocates remain divided over the best strategy for a permanent solution.



Senator Jon Kyl (R-AZ) was appointed to negotiate this issue for Senate Republicans and has indicated that he has tried to reach out in an effort of compromise, but a deal has yet to be reached.

The Senator has, however, asked Majority Leader Bill Frist (R-TN) to schedule a vote on the issue early this year.

A vote had been scheduled for last September, but the immediate needs following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita forced the Senate to rearrange its schedule and focus on recovery efforts instead.

Under the terms of the 2001 tax law, the estate tax is being phased out and will be fully eliminated in 2010, however the repeal only lasts one year and would be back at full strength in 2011.

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On the Congressional Schedule



While the Senate has already returned to Washington to focus on the nomination of Judge Samuel Alito to the Supreme Court, the House does not return until January 31 must in time for the President to give his State of the Union address that evening.

During this speech, the President will lay out his agenda for the coming year. He will officially announce his Fiscal Year 2007 budget to Congress on Monday, February 20, 2006.

The major issues facing Congress this spring are expected to be the confirmation of Judge Alito, the war in Iraq and homeland security, the Fiscal Year 2007 appropriations bills and lobbying reform spurred on by the Jack Abramoff scandal.



Clean School Bus Funding

The EPA is preparing to announce their plans for how they will administer grant funds provided by Congress for Fiscal Year 2006 under the Clean School Bus USA program.

The program provides funding for the replacement and retrofit of school buses with advanced air filtration and after treatment technology to

provide a total of \$7 billion in funding for the Fiscal

last year's stimulus bill.

associations. trade

from July to November 2006

60 vehicles

for health

New Mexico would provide a refund of tax paid on fuel used in all school buses.

South Dakota would appropriate \$2 million to assist school districts with increased energy costs, but it appears as though it applies only to heating costs, not to transportation.

Indiana would encourage school districts to reduce non-academic costs through shared resources and cooperative purchasing (of transportation services, for example); would require the state board to consider statewide purchases of school buses; and (in a not-so-positive step) would allow districts to transport homeless students in vehicles other than school buses.

New Mexico would make several appropriations in 2007 for school buses, including \$2 million to equip buses in rural areas on routes that are at least 30 miles each way with televisions and VCRs for educational programming; another \$2.4 million to buses with GPS systems and to provide drivers with cell phones and cellular service; another \$300,000 to reimburse school districts for the cost of required air conditioning on lift-equipped buses; and (our favorite) \$50,000 to encourage and support school bus drivers in participating in a national safety competition.

Not everyone is moving in the right direction, of course, as the following bills indicate:

Hawaii would require all school buses purchased by the state after July 1 to be equipped with seat belts; all contracts for school bus transportation entered into or extended after July 1 to include a requirement for seat belts; and all children riding in school buses to use a seat belt after July 1, 2006. (The bill doesn't explain the incongruence between the

use requirement and the equipment requirement.)

Indiana would allow school districts to use their buses to provide transportation service to nonprofit organizations, as long as they charge only for fuel.

Rhode Island would allow advertising on the exterior of school buses, though not on the interior.

New Jersey would require all school buses to carry a sign bearing the owner's phone number and requesting motorists to call the number if the bus is observed violating traffic laws or causing a traffic problem.

Oklahoma would require all school buses and other vehicles used to transport students that are purchased after January 1, 2007, to have a Plexiglas divider between the driver and the passenger area.

NOTE:
If something is happening in **Your State** that you think would interest other NSTA members, please let us know.

One of our goals is to facilitate the sharing of information among members and among state associations, since we can learn much from each other. Drop a line to pleeds@yellowbuses.org or call 800-560-1645.

NSTA's "Get Up and Advocate" campaign is a nationwide education and outreach effort designed to strengthen the voice of the school bus industry on Capitol Hill. A strong unified voice on Capitol Hill |
ansportation professionals to have a voice that is heard when new or amended programs are under consideration. Call us to find out how you can help -
(800) 222-NSTA (6782)



Maintenance Workshops Scheduled for 2006!

NSTA is pleased to announce that Maintenance Workshops at Manufacturers' plants are scheduled for 2006!

This is an excellent opportunity for your maintenance technicians and other staff to become experts on how a school bus operates and learn how to troubleshoot mechanical issues with ease. Workshops will be held at the following locations and during the dates listed:

Blue Bird Corporation -- Fort Valley, GA

- February 28 - March 1
- July 18 - 19
- September 19 - 20

International Truck & Engine Corporation -- Tulsa, OK

- March 6 - 9
- June 26 - 29
- September 25 - 28

Thomas Built Buses-- High Point, NC

- March 14 - 15
- October 24 - 25

Registration forms are available online on the home page (and events section) of the NSTA website, www.yellowbuses.org.

If you would like to find out more about these workshops, you can also contact NSTA Headquarters at (800) 222-NSTA or by e-mail at info@yellowbuses.org.



Important Dates to Note...

March 15 - 16, 2006
NSTA Safety & Security
Workshop
(includes the School Bus
Watch Program)

*Holiday Inn Select
Tinley Park, Illinois*

July 23-26, 2006
42nd Annual Meeting
and Convention

*Harrah's
Lake Tahoe, Nevada*

January 28-31, 2007
Midwinter Meeting

*Loews Ventana Canyon
Resort
Tucson, Arizona*

July 14-18, 2007
43rd Annual Meeting
and Convention

*Westin Waterfront Hotel
Boston, Massachusetts*

Three Cheers for our Sponsors!



We'd like to take one last opportunity to thank all of our sponsors who made the NSTA Midwinter Meeting such a success. Thank you very much!

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If you would like to find out more about sponsoring an event or giveaway during the NSTA 42nd Annual Meeting and Convention, or International Safety Competition, please contact Jennifer Carroll, CMP, at (888) 97EVENT or by e-mail at jcarroll@yellowbuses.org.

Get Ready to Register for the NSTA Safety & Security Workshop

NSTA will be holding a Safety & Security Workshop on March 15th and 16th at the Holiday Inn Tinley Park in the suburbs of Chicago, Illinois. This important training opportunity is the second time NSTA has offered such an event for the school bus industry.

Learn what you need to know to start a safety plan or strengthen the one you have. Safety and security experts will provide you with the information, knowledge, and resources you need to recruit qualified drivers, the latest information on school bus insurance programs, and strategies for preparing and protecting your business in emergency situations.

Register on the NSTA website at www.yellowbuses.org, call us at 800-222-NSTA (6782), or e-mail us at info@yellowbuses.org to find out more.

Room rates are \$92 and registration is open to both STA/ISTA members