



# NEWSLETTER

APRIL 21, 2006

This publication is a member service of

**National School  
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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"

## Have You Read this Article?

*We have been running this article for several months now, updating it each week. You will continue to see versions of this article until we can get at least **eight more co-sponsors so... PLEASE HELP!***

*If you have not contacted your Member of Congress yet, please help us promote this important resolution. NSTA's website can help you pen the letter! Go to the website and click on the ACTION ALERT image on the top of the front page.*

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.

The most current list of co-sponsors to the Resolution, totaling 42, include: Representatives Timothy Bishop (R-UT), Sherwood Boehlert (R-NY), John Boozman (R-AR), Jeb Bradley (R-NH), Ben Cardin (D-MD), Ken Calvert (R-CA), Jerry Costello (D-IL), Danny Davis (D-IL) Rosa DeLauro (D-CT), Eliot Engel (D-NY), Jim Gerlach (R-PA), Stephanie Herseth (D-SD), Maurice Hinchey (D-NY), Darrell Issa (R-CA), Tim Johnson (R-IL), Sue Kelly (R-NY), Randy Kuhl (R-NY), Ray LaHood (R-IL), Carolyn

Maloney (D-NY), Carolyn McCarthy (D-NY), Betty McCollum (D-MN), Jim McGovern (D-MA), Mike McIntyre (D-NC), Michael McNulty (R-NY), Richard Neal (D-MA), Tom Osborne (R-NE), Frank Pallone (D-NJ), Donald Payne (D-NJ), Tom Petri (R-WI), Joseph Pitts (R-PA), Dutch Ruppersberger (D-MD), Tim Ryan (D-OH), Martin Sabo (D-MN), John Shimkus (R-IL), Rob Simmons (R-CT), Ike Skelton (D-MO), Mark Souder (R-IN), Ted Strickland (D-OH), Mark Udall (D-CO), Fred Upton (R-MI), Anthony Weiner (D-NY) and Curt Weldon (R-PA). (Bold italics denote new additions to the list of co-sponsors.)

We have made much progress in securing co-sponsors and we thank you for your efforts to date, but we still have a long way to go. A new letter from Congressman Duncan to all Members of the House of Representatives was recently sent, so this is a great time to follow up with your Member of Congress. Please contact them 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.

**www.  
yellowbuses.  
org**



## Senate Democrats Call for Support of Price Gouging Bill

As oil prices rose to more than \$70 a barrel this week, Senate Democratic leaders called on President Bush to fight price gouging through the support of legislation to strengthen enforcement and penalties.



In a letter to President Bush, 15 Democrats including Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid of Nevada criticized the President's "absence of leadership" on this issue and threatened to move ahead with their own proposals if they could not reach agreement.

The President stated this week that he is concerned about the rising prices and the government would protect consumers against unfair practices. "I'm concerned what it means to the working families and small businesses, and I'm also mindful that the government has the responsibility to make sure that we watch very carefully to investigate possible price gouging. And we'll do just that," the President stated.

In their letter to the President, Senate Democrats cited a bill offered by fellow Democrat Maria Cantwell of Washington. The Energy Emergency Consumer Protection Act would impose tougher fines and penalties on companies that take advantage of supply emergencies and give the Federal Trade Commission and state attorneys general new authority to enforce laws against price gouging. The bill, which as 29 Democratic and no Republican co-sponsors, has been referred to the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee which has yet to take action.



## EPA Delegates 2006 Clean School Bus Funding to Regions

EPA has announced that the \$7 million appropriated by Congress for the Clean School Bus USA program in 2006 will be distributed through EPA's regional network rather than through a national competition. The eligible recipients will include school transportation associations.

Each of the various EPA Regional offices will issue their own Requests for Applications, and links to them will be posted on EPA's website as they become available ([www.epa.gov/cleanschoolbus](http://www.epa.gov/cleanschoolbus)). The first region to announce its RFA is Region 5, serving Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. The deadline for applications in Region 5 is June 16.

Although contractors are not eligible to apply on their own, there are several ways that NSTA members can access this funding either to retrofit current buses or to help replace buses older than 1990. One way is to partner with the school districts you serve to apply for a grant; another is to work with a local or state-wide nonprofit organization, such as the lung association; still another is to go through your city or county education department or a local air quality agency. Most importantly, your state school bus association can apply for a grant that they can use to fund subgrants to members and their customers.

NSTA worked hard to ensure that our members would be able to take advantage of this year's Clean School Bus grant funds, as many have taken advantage of previous opportunities. We urge you to watch for the announcement in your region, and ask for a share of the money. We'll keep you posted on the regional awards.



### HAWAII:

The House adopted a bill requiring a study of the effects, costs, and advisability of mandating seat belts on all school buses.

### OKLAHOMA:

The Senate is considering a House-passed bill that would allow contractors to buy tax-exempt fuel directly rather than purchasing it through the school district.

### VIRGINIA:

The Governor approved a bill exempting school bus drivers and aides from charges of simple assault for using reasonable and necessary force in the performance of their duties.

### CONNECTICUT:

A bill that would have required all school buses to be equipped with closed cP f0205 161.82 Tm(T: )TjEN9d



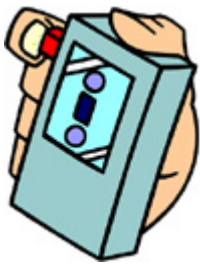
## Recalls

**Blue Bird All American and Vision**, manufactured from July 7 to November 8, 2005, and equipped with Ricon S and K series platform style wheelchair lifts.

The vertical support arms for the lifts were improperly welded, preventing the lift from stowing properly.

It may not be possible to close the lift door, causing the vehicle interlocks to remain engaged and prevent movement of the vehicle or lose the ability to unload passengers with disabilities from the vehicle.

Blue Bird is expected to begin notifying customers on May 12.



## Prosecutor Declines to Press Charges in Bus Cam Incident

The prosecutor for Allegheny County in Pennsylvania announced last week that he will not press charges against Laidlaw Education Services for audio taping students on school buses without their consent. As you remember, state police seized the recording units from 70 buses after viewing a tape and discovering that the camera was recording audio as well as video.

Under Pennsylvania law, secret audiotaping is a third-degree felony, punishable by up to seven years in prison and a \$15,000 fine. After the equipment was found on the buses, state police said the company could face charges for every person on every bus with a camera.

In announcing his decision, the prosecutor said that he discerned no intent on Laidlaw's part to violate the Wiretapping and Electronic Surveillance Act, and Laidlaw agreed to cease audio taping pending legislative action. The prosecutor also provided guidelines to school districts in the county that would allow them to use audio. They must adopt a policy for its use, notify parents and students of the policy, and post signs in the buses that both audio and video are being used. A state representative told the news conference that he believes there will be a bipartisan effort to change the law to allow audiotaping in school buses following those guidelines.

The decision of the Allegheny prosecutor affects only school districts in Allegheny County. Other Pennsylvania prosecutors disagree that notification is sufficient to protect a company or district under the current law. Until the issue is decided in the legislature or in court, there will be confusion in Pennsylvania—and every other state.

## Maintenance Workshops Continue



NSTA is pleased to announce the continuation of the Maintenance Workshops at Manufacturers' plants!

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**

- July 18 - 19
- September 19 - 20

### **International Truck & Engine Corporation -- Tulsa, OK**

- ~~June 26-29~~ **SOLD OUT!**
- September 25 - 28

### **Thomas Built Buses-- High Point, NC**

- October 24 - 25

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

## Important Events to Mark in your Calendar...

**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**  
43<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting  
and Convention  
*Westin Waterfront Hotel  
Boston, Massachusetts*

**It's Time to Book your  
Rooms for NSTA's  
Summer Convention!**



NSTA's Summer Convention will be held at **Harrah's Resort in Lake Tahoe, Nevada**, July 22-26, 2006.

A special group block has been set up for NSTA attendees and is available at the discounted group rate of \$165 single or double occupancy. Rooms are limited and are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

To make reservations for your room(s), call **(800) 455-4770** and ask for the Group Code: **S07-NSTA**. Additional information on the convention will be sent out next week, as well as be available in the Upcoming Events section of the NSTA website ([www.yellowbuses.org](http://www.yellowbuses.org)).

**NSTA's Online Marketplace**

 ***The School Transportation Outsourcing Toolkit***

 ***The Yellow Bus Industry: Safety, Caring and Innovations***



**And, Coming Soon...**

Novelty items such as pins, coffee mugs, watches, and more! Click on the NSTA Marketplace link on our website at [www.yellowbuses.org](http://www.yellowbuses.org) to find out more.



The NSTA Board of Directors and staff would like to offer best wishes to **ROBIN LEEDS** and her (soon to be) husband, **NIP TANNER**, who will be married on April 29<sup>th</sup> in Mystic, Connecticut!

**Welcome  
New  
Member!**

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**Plain Edge  
Public Schools**  
Cheryl Oestreich  
North Massapequa,  
New York