

Senate Bill No. 614

An act relating to bus transportation; amending s. 316.70, F.S.; requiring the driving records of nonpublic sector bus drivers to be checked for suspended or revoked licenses; amending s. 316.6145, F.S.; clarifying applicability of requirements that school buses purchased after a specified date be equipped with safety belts or other restraints; providing that private school students may ride on public school buses and public school students may ride on private school buses, subject to specified conditions; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Paragraph (d) is added to subsection (1) of section 316.70, Florida Statutes, to read:

316.70 Nonpublic sector buses; safety rules.—

(1) The Department of Transportation shall establish and revise standards to assure the safe operation of nonpublic sector buses, as defined in s. 316.003(78), which standards shall be those contained in 49 C.F.R. parts 382, 385, and 390-397 and which shall be directed towards assuring that:

(d) The driving records of drivers of nonpublic sector buses are checked by their employers at least once each year to ascertain whether the driver has a suspended or revoked driver's license.

Section 2. Paragraph (a) of subsection (1) of section 316.6145, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

316.6145 School buses; safety belts or other restraint systems required.—

(1)(a) Each school bus that is purchased new after December 31, 2000, and used to transport students in grades pre-K through 12 must be equipped with safety belts or with any other restraint system approved by the Federal Government in a number sufficient to allow each student who is being transported to use a separate safety belt or restraint system. These safety belts must meet the standards required under s. 316.614. A school bus that was purchased prior to December 31, 2000, is not required to be equipped with safety belts.

Section 3. Private school students may be transported on public school buses and public school students may be transported on private school buses when there is mutual agreement between the local school board and the applicable private school. Any agreement for private school students to be transported on public school buses must be in accordance with sections 768.28(9)(a) and 316.6145, Florida Statutes. Any agreement for public school students to be transported on private school buses must be contingent on the private school bus driver's having adequate liability insurance through his or her employer.

Section 4. This act shall take effect July 1, 2003.

Approved by the Governor June 4, 2003.

Filed in Office Secretary of State June 4, 2003.