



General Assembly

January Session, 2023

Raised Bill No. 1081

LCO No. 4692



Referred to Committee on TRANSPORTATION

Introduced by:
(TRA)

AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF A GLOBAL POSITIONING SYSTEM ON A SCHOOL BUS AND THE SHORTAGE OF SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Subsection (c) of section 14-296aa of the general statutes is
2 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*
3 *2023*):

4 (c) No person shall use a hand-held mobile telephone or other
5 electronic device, including those with hands-free accessories, or a
6 mobile electronic device while operating a school bus that is carrying
7 passengers, except that this subsection shall not apply when such
8 person: (1) ~~[places]~~ Places an emergency call to school officials; [,] (2)
9 uses a hand-held mobile telephone as provided in subparagraph (A) of
10 subdivision (4) of subsection (b) of this section; [, or] (3) uses a hand-
11 held mobile telephone or mobile electronic device in a manner similar
12 to a two-way radio to allow real-time communication with a school
13 official, an emergency response operator, a hospital, physician's office
14 or health clinic, an ambulance company, a fire department or a police
15 department; or (4) uses a mobile electronic device that has a video
16 display area of not more than thirteen inches nor less than nine inches

17 measured diagonally, provided such device (A) is used as a global
18 positioning system or to provide navigation, (B) is securely attached to
19 the dashboard of such school bus, and (C) cannot be removed from such
20 dashboard or used to engage in a call or type, read or send text or a text
21 message while such school bus is in operation.

22 Sec. 2. Subsection (b) of section 14-276a of the general statutes is
23 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*
24 *2023*):

25 (b) No person shall operate a school bus, as defined in section 14-275₂,
26 as amended by this act, or a student transportation vehicle, as defined
27 in section 14-212, for the purpose of transporting school children unless
28 such person has prior to the issuance or renewal of such person's license
29 endorsement: (1) Furnished evidence to the satisfaction of the
30 commissioner that such person meets the physical qualification
31 standards established in 49 CFR 391, as amended from time to time; and
32 (2) successfully completed a course in safety training and, in the case of
33 school bus operators, passed an examination in proficiency in school bus
34 operation given by the commissioner. Such proficiency examination
35 shall include a road test administered in either a type I school bus
36 having a gross vehicle weight exceeding ten thousand pounds or a type
37 II school bus having a gross vehicle weight of ten thousand pounds or
38 less. The commissioner shall prioritize scheduling a road test for
39 persons seeking or renewing a public passenger endorsement to operate
40 a school bus. Any operator administered a road test in a type II school
41 bus shall not be eligible for a license to operate a type I school bus. Any
42 person who violates any provision of this subsection shall be deemed to
43 have committed an infraction.

44 Sec. 3. (*Effective from passage*) On and after July 1, 2023, and until
45 November 27, 2024, the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles shall waive the
46 engine compartment component of the commercial driver's license test,
47 as set forth in 49 CFR 383.113(a)(1)(i), as amended from time to time, for
48 applicants seeking or renewing a public passenger endorsement to
49 operate a school bus as permitted by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety

50 Administration and published in the Federal Register of October 27,
51 2022. Any applicant who receives such a waiver and is granted a public
52 passenger endorsement to operate a school bus pursuant to subsection
53 (a) of section 14-44 of the general statutes shall only operate a school bus
54 within the state to transport students from home to school, from school
55 to home, or to and from school-sponsored events.

56 Sec. 4. (*Effective from passage*) The Commissioner of Motor Vehicles
57 shall study and make recommendations regarding policies or initiatives
58 to respond to the nation-wide shortage of school bus drivers. Such study
59 shall consider, at a minimum, increasing the period of validity for a
60 commercial driver's license from a four-year period to a five-year period
61 and streamlining the licensing and renewal processes for a public
62 passenger endorsement to operate a school bus. On or before February
63 1, 2024, the commissioner shall submit the results of such study and
64 recommendations to the joint standing committee of the General
65 Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to transportation, in
66 accordance with section 11-4a of the general statutes.

67 Sec. 5. Subsection (b) of section 14-275 of the general statutes is
68 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*
69 *2023*):

70 (b) Each school bus shall be painted a uniform yellow color known as
71 "National School Bus Glossy Yellow", except for the fenders and trim
72 which may be painted black and the roof which may be painted white,
73 and shall have conspicuously painted on the rear and on the front of
74 such vehicle, in black lettering of a size to be determined by the
75 Commissioner of Motor Vehicles, the words "School Bus-Stop on
76 Signal", except that each school bus equipped with an eight-light
77 warning system shall have the words "School Bus" painted on the rear
78 and on the front of such vehicle in such lettering. The sides of such
79 vehicles may be inscribed with the words "School Bus", the school name
80 or such other legend or device as may be necessary for purposes of
81 identification or safety. Each school bus, and any student transportation
82 vehicle, as defined in section 14-212, regularly used by any town,

83 regional school district, private school or entity contracting with such
 84 town, regional school district or private school to transport school
 85 children to and from school or school activities, shall have
 86 conspicuously painted on the rear and sides of such bus or student
 87 transportation vehicle, in black lettering of a size to be determined by
 88 the commissioner, the name of the school bus company, the school bus
 89 company's telephone number and the school bus number or the name
 90 of the owner or operator of such student transportation vehicle, the
 91 telephone number of such owner or operator and the fleet number of
 92 such student transportation vehicle. The sides and rear of such school
 93 bus may display decals, posters or stickers for the purpose of
 94 advertising employment opportunities for school bus drivers.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2023</i>	14-296aa(c)
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2023</i>	14-276a(b)
Sec. 3	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 4	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 5	<i>July 1, 2023</i>	14-275(b)

Statement of Purpose:

To (1) permit the use of a mobile electronic device for navigation purposes on a school bus by a school bus driver, (2) waive the engine compartment portion of the commercial driver license's test for applicants seeking or renewing a public passenger endorsement to operate a school bus, (3) study policies and initiatives to address the nationwide school bus driver shortage, and (4) permit the advertising of employment opportunities for school bus drivers on school buses.

[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]