



# Ohio Legislative Service Commission

Mary Morris

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## Fiscal Note & Local Impact Statement

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**Bill:** Sub. S.B. 84 of the 128th G.A.      **Date:** December 14, 2010  
**Status:** As Reported by Senate Highways & Transportation      **Sponsor:** Sen. Wagoner

**Local Impact Statement Procedure Required:** No — No local cost

**Contents:** Safety belts on buses that transport college students

### State Fiscal Highlights

- The bill prohibits state institutions of higher education from purchasing a bus that is not equipped with safety belts. Institutions may incur additional expenses to lease or purchase buses with safety belts or alternate transit vehicles.

### Local Fiscal Highlights

- No direct fiscal effect on political subdivisions.

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## Detailed Fiscal Analysis

The bill prohibits institutions of higher education from purchasing or leasing a bus that is not equipped with occupant restraining devices (safety belts) for every passenger. The bill also prohibits campuses from renting or chartering a bus that is not equipped with safety belts unless the bus was owned prior to the bill's effective date. Most of Ohio's public institutions of higher education do not own buses, however some of Ohio's larger institutions own multiple buses for both short distance and long distance travel. Currently, safety belts are not a common feature on buses; therefore the bill's provisions would likely increase an institution's cost to purchase a new bus. The United States Department of Transportation (DOT) estimates that the addition of safety belts to a new bus costs approximately \$12,900 per vehicle.<sup>1</sup> Alternatively, institutions could choose to use large vans, which are commonly equipped with safety belts. Because three to four vans would be necessary to seat the same number of passengers as one large (38-45 seat) bus, incidental expenses would likely increase. Actual expenses would vary based on local availability and markets.

In August 2010, DOT proposed a safety standards rule that would require lap/shoulder seat belts for each passenger in a newly constructed motorcoach, defined as a bus seating 16 or more and weighing 26,000 pounds or more. DOT indicates that the rule could be finalized as early as 2011, and bus manufacturers would have three years to comply with the safety belt requirements. School buses, urban transit buses, and existing motorcoaches are exempted from the proposed rule.

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<sup>1</sup> National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Department of Transportation, 49 CFR, Part 571: [http://www.nhtsa.gov/staticfiles/rulemaking/pdf/NPRM\\_Belts\\_on\\_motorcoaches.pdf](http://www.nhtsa.gov/staticfiles/rulemaking/pdf/NPRM_Belts_on_motorcoaches.pdf).