



For Immediate Release

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National School Transportation Association comments on National Transportation Safety Board investigation of Rochester, Indiana fatal accident

The National School Transportation Association (NSTA) has reviewed the summary abstract submitted by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) yesterday in its completed investigation of the October 30, 2018, Rochester, Indiana - Vehicle Collision with Student Pedestrians Crossing High-Speed Roadway to Board School Bus. NSTA applauds the pursuit to identify measures that can be immediately taken to eliminate future occurrences of illegal passing collisions.

The April 7 abstract summarizes the NTSB investigation into the October 30 collision that involved a pick-up truck and four students attempting to board their school bus. This tragic instance, where three students were killed and one seriously injured, was the impetus for NSTA to pursue introduction of the STOP for School Buses Act of 2019 (STOP Act) (S. 1254/H.R. 2218). This bill was introduced in the House of Representatives by Congresswomen Jackie Walorski (IN-2) and Julia Brownley (CA-26), and in the U.S. Senate by Senators Gary Peters (MI) and Todd Young (IN).

“The unfortunate Rochester fatal accident, as outlined in these NTSB investigative findings, strengthen the resolve of NSTA to eliminate illegal passings of stopped school buses that have the net effect of placing school children in harm’s way. The message should be sent loud and clear to motorists that these incidents are preventable, and distracted driving is not acceptable under any circumstances, let alone around a school bus. It is precisely why we partnered with Congresswomen Walorski (IN-2) and Brownley (CA-26) and Senators Peters (MI) and Young (IN) to introduce bipartisan legislation, commonly referred to as The STOP Act. The fatal collision that occurred in Rochester was a tragedy that the school transportation industry wishes to never see repeated,” Macysyn emphasized.

NSTA remains concerned over the rising instances of illegal passing, as identified in the 2019 National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services (NASDPTS) voluntary stop-arm survey that showed more than 95,000 illegal passings in 39 states that conducted the survey over the course of a single day.

The STOP for School Buses Act addresses several issues stated in the NTSB evaluation of this fatal accident, including a requirement that the U.S. Department of Transportation (U.S.D.O.T.) review technologies and driver education materials, and offer recommendations for improvements. The bill also directs the U.S.D.O.T. to implement more severe penalties for drivers convicted of illegally passing stopped buses, asking the Department to evaluate laws, enforcement and penalties in all 50 states and recommend best practices and effective approaches.

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About NSTA: National School Transportation Association has been the voice of private school bus contractors, manufacturers and suppliers since 1964. The association provides school transportation professionals with the tools and resources they need to make school buses safe, affordable, and efficient nationwide.