

Draft Proclamation of Support for National School Bus Safety Week

Whereas, Children are our nation's most precious resource, representing our nation's future, and protecting them needs to be our highest priority; and

Whereas, 480,000 school buses carry 26 million elementary and secondary children 52 million passenger trips daily traveling approximately 4.4 billion miles each year; and

Whereas, America's school buses comprise the largest mass transportation fleet in the country, being 2.5 times the size of all other forms of mass transportation combined; and

Whereas, School buses meet higher construction specifications and inspection standards than any other vehicle; and

Whereas, According to the latest National Highway Traffic Safety Administration statement, the fatality rate for school buses is only 0.2 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled compared to 1.5 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled for cars; and that makes school buses the safest means of transportation in the nation: and

Whereas, School bus drivers meet higher qualification, training, and testing standards than any other drivers; and

Whereas, Many people are not aware that the school bus is the safest way for children to get to school, and many parents erroneously believe that driving their children to school helps protect them from injury, yet according to data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's Fatality Analysis Reporting System, about 800 children are killed annually during normal school travel hours in vehicles other than school buses; and

Whereas, Most of the 15 children killed each year around school buses are aged five to seven and are killed in the area immediately surrounding the bus, either by a passing car or the bus itself; and

Whereas, It is estimated that each week, 350,000 cars ignore the flashing red lights on a school buses and pass the bus during loading and unloading procedures; and

Whereas, National School Bus Safety Week, which dates back to 1966, recognizes the hard work and dedication of school transportation personnel, especially the many school bus drivers who ensure a safe journey each and every day; and

Whereas, National School Bus Safety Week, is celebrated in the United States and different parts of the world to remind all students of the best ways to get on and off the bus, safe riding rules and in an effort to enhance the safety of the children; and

Whereas, National School Bus Safety Week, celebrated the third full week in October, promotes awareness through local and state poster contests, lessons utilizing school bus safety community awareness kits, and other activities built around themes that raise awareness of school bus safety issues: and

Whereas, The thousands of pupil transportation professionals throughout every state work continuously to promote the safety of our nation's school aged children and to improve upon an already stellar safety record through national conferences, driving and poster competitions, and local medial promotions emphasizing the importance of school bus safety both on and off the school bus: and

Now, therefore, I Barack Hussein Obama, President of the United States of America, by the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States do hereby proclaim the third full week in October as National School Bus Safety Week each year, and encourage all citizens to join me in recognizing the hard work and dedication of pupil transportation professionals, the excellent safety record of school bus drivers, the benefits of school bus driver training, the importance of students obeying safety rules at all times, and the need for heightened vigilance on the part of all vehicle drivers when in the vicinity of school buses.

In Witness Thereof, I have hereunto set my hand this ____ day of _____ in the year of our Lord two thousand nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-fifth.