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**HOUSE BILL NO. 1561**

Offered January 11, 2017

Prefiled December 29, 2016

*A BILL to amend and reenact § 22.1-177 of the Code of Virginia, relating to public school buses; seat belts.*

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Patrons—Krizek and Bulova

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Referred to Committee on Militia, Police and Public Safety**Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:****1. That § 22.1-177 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:****§ 22.1-177. Regulations.**

A. The Board (i) may make regulations relating to the construction, design, operation, equipment, and color of public school buses and ~~shall have the authority to~~ issue an order prohibiting the operation on public streets and highways of any public school bus that does not comply with such regulations *and (ii) shall make regulations that require each new public school bus purchased for the transportation of students to be equipped with a seat belt in every seat.* Any such order shall be enforced by the Department of State Police.

B. Local school boards may, notwithstanding any regulation to the contrary, display decals depicting the flag of the United States on the sides and rear of school buses as long as any such decal does not obstruct the name of the school division or the number of the school bus and is no larger than 100 square inches. In addition, local school boards may, notwithstanding any regulation to the contrary, display decals relating to school bus safety. Local school divisions shall be responsible for the cost of the decals. Such decal shall not obstruct the name of the school division or the number of the school bus.

C. No regulation of the Board shall unreasonably limit the authority of any local school division to purchase and use school buses using compressed natural gas or other alternative fuels or convert its school buses to use compressed natural gas or other alternative fuels.

D. Any local school board may, notwithstanding any regulation to the contrary, sell or transfer any of its school buses to another school division or purchase a used school bus from another school division or a school bus dealer as long as the school bus (i) conforms to the specifications relating to construction and design effective in the Commonwealth on the date of manufacture; (ii) has a valid Virginia State Police inspection; and (iii) has not reached the end of its useful life according to the school bus replacement schedule utilized by the Department of Education as required by the general appropriation act.

**2. That each school board shall ensure that no later than July 1, 2027, each school bus that it uses for the transportation of students is equipped with a seat belt in every seat.**

INTRODUCED

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