

Commission on Local Government

Estimate of Local Fiscal Impact

2018 General Assembly Session

Bill: HB 224

Patron: Krizek

Date: 1/17/2018

In accordance with the provisions of §30-19.03 of the Code of Virginia, the staff of the Commission on Local Government offers the following analysis of the above-referenced legislation:

Bill Summary:

Requires the Board of Education to make regulations to require each new public school bus purchased for the transportation of students to be equipped with a seat belt consisting of a lap belt and shoulder strap or harness in every seat. The bill requires each school board to ensure that no later than July 1, 2036, each school bus that it uses for the transportation of students is equipped with a seat belt in every seat.

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**Executive Summary:**

Requirements of the provisions of the HB224 would be a mandate to the localities. Localities have evaluated a negative fiscal impact ranging from \$0.00 - \$20,000,000.00. Localities noted that the estimated cost to implement 3 point seat belts would be for new buses and there would be additional ongoing cost for maintenance. One locality noted that the implementation of new seat belt system would also reduce the number of rider seats per bus by 1 – 3 seats, and would lingering safety concerns regarding delays during emergency evacuations. Only one locality's estimated fiscal impact is zero as they are unable to determine the cost but noted that there would be a significant cost to comply. Another locality noted that they are already moving to this direction and has plan to place 3 point seat belts in all future school buses purchased.

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**Local Analysis:**

**Locality:** City of Danville

**Estimated Fiscal Impact:**  
\$7,000,000.00

Estimates provided in Summer 2017 provided figures of \$20,000 to retrofit buses and \$105,000 for new buses that meet the requirement. An estimate of \$7 million for buses, training, and ongoing maintenance.

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Locality: City of Harrisonburg

Estimated Fiscal Impact: \$0.00

Unable to determine the cost but there would be a significant cost to the city for a fleet of 50+ buses over the time required. The city would not be in support of this legislation.

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**Locality:** County of Henrico

**Estimated Fiscal Impact:** \$258,440.00

The cost for adding 3-point belts is \$9,230 per bus. With approximately 28 buses purchased each year, the estimated fiscal impact would be \$258,440 per year. Henrico is already moving in this direction and has plans to place 3-point seat belts in all future school buses purchased.

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Locality: Fairfax County

Estimated Fiscal Impact:
\$20,000,000.00

The initial cost to install a lap belt and shoulder strap or harness in every seat (no longer just a lap belt) is approximately \$12,000 per bus. Given the size of the fleet, it would cost almost \$20,000,000 to install three point belts on all new buses. There is an additional cost to maintain the seat belts at approximately \$460 annually per bus. If all new buses were installed with a three point belt, the maintenance costs are estimated at \$750,000 annually. The three point belts would also reduce the number of rider seats per bus by 1-3 seats, which would need to be absorbed at an estimated cost of \$400 per seat or up to \$1200 per bus. The cost of installing new seat belt systems might delay the replacement of older buses. There may also be lingering safety concerns regarding delays during emergency evacuations.

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