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August 29, 2018

Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr.  
California State Capitol, Suite 1173  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 1798 (Chu): Schoolbuses: passenger restraint systems**  
**AAP-CA Position: Support**

Dear Governor Brown,

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA), representing over 5,000 California pediatricians, strongly supports proposed legislation AB 1798 (Chu), which would require all school buses in California to be equipped with a passenger restraint system by 2035.

According to estimates from the Fatality Analysis Reporting System, about 13,000 people are injured every year in school bus crashes, nearly half of whom are passengers on the buses themselves. Other studies suggest that this may be a significant undercount, as reporting of such injuries is usually voluntary. Part of the problem has to do with the lack of seat belts on many school buses. While federal law does not require larger buses to have seatbelts as long as they follow guidelines on “compartmentalization”—i.e., closely spaced seats with energy-absorbing backs—the National Transportation Safety Board has determined that this leaves students vulnerable. The AAP Policy Statement on School Transportation Safety states: “Compartmentalization does not provide protection during lateral (side) impacts with vehicles of large mass or in rollover collisions, because passengers do not always remain completely within the compartment.” Additionally, passenger restraint systems improve student behavior by keeping students in their seats, decreasing driver distraction and lessening the probability of an accident.

AB 1798 (Chu) would improve school bus safety by requiring all California buses to be equipped with passenger restraint systems by 2035, and would put California on track to conform with the AAP recommendation “that all children travel in age-appropriate, properly secured child-restraint systems when transported in all motor vehicles, including school buses.”

Pediatrician members of AAP California Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4 statewide respectfully request you to sign AB 1798 (Chu) into law. Thank you for your public service and leadership on behalf of the health and wellbeing of children, youth, and families in California.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marti Baum". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'M' and 'B'.

Marti Baum, M.D., Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics  
State Government Affairs Committee, American Academy of Pediatrics – California

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Phyllis Agran". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'P' and 'A'.

Phyllis Agran, M.D., Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics  
Executive Board Member, American Academy of Pediatrics, California

cc: Assemblymember Kansen Chu (Author); AAP-CA Leadership; Lobbyist Lydia Bourne