



April 14, 2017

The Honorable Kansen Chu
State Capitol – Room 2160
P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249-0025
Fax: (916) 319-2125

RE: AB 692 (Chu): Schoolbuses: passenger restraint systems
AAP-CA Position: SUPPORT

Dear Assemblymember Chu:

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA), representing over 5,000 California pediatricians, strongly supports your proposed legislation AB 692 (Chu). This bill would require that all school buses be equipped with three-point lap-shoulder seat belts by 2020, through retrofit of old buses or purchase of new buses, and would also create a task force with the State Department of Education, the Department of the California Highway Patrol, and other appropriate entities to develop a plan to oversee and ensure compliance.

As noted in American Academy of Pediatrics policy, seatbelt-free school buses do not provide optimal protection for children riding within: “Compartmentalization [provided by seats that are closely spaced with high, energy-absorbing seat backs] has been the occupant-protection system for children in large school buses for more than 30 years... However, recent studies have revealed that compartmentalization does not offer optimal protection and is not consistent with current technology and messages for children and families regarding the use of car safety seats and seat belts in all motor vehicles.” It is essential that we provide secure transportation to school children. While current law requires that new school buses be outfitted with three-point seat belts, which dummy crash-testing has shown to be safer than compartmentalization or lap seat belts, only 54% of school buses had seat belts as of 2016. This leaves many children vulnerable.

AB 692 (Chu) would make sure that all children have access to seat belts in their school transportation by 2020. This not only stands to save lives and reduce injuries of children involved in school bus accidents but also helps model proper seat belt usage for school children so that they are in the habit of always wearing their seat belts.

Pediatricians across the state proudly support AB 692 (Chu). We thank you for your leadership on behalf of the health and well-being of children, youth, and families in California.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan Wu". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Susan" being more prominent than the last name "Wu".

Susan Wu, M.D., Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics
State Government Affairs Committee, American Academy of Pediatrics, California

CC: Kris Calvin, CEO; AAP-CA Leadership; Lydia Bourne