

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 3457
By: Hochberg
Public Education
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Often school buses will idle outside our schools or at a school event for long periods of time. The tailpipe exhaust generated by diesel engines accumulates in and around the buses and poses a known health risk to children and to bus drivers. Breathing air heavy with exhaust particulates can be dangerous, even over a short time, because these substances can enter the circulatory system and damage blood vessels. Children are more susceptible to this damage than adults. Additionally, there is a financial cost to this practice – idling wastes fuel and money. The less school buses idle, the more money school districts can save.

The primary objective of this bill is to improve the health and safety of school children and others by limiting school bus idling at our public schools and school events. A secondary objective is cost savings. This bill restricts school buses from idling for unnecessary periods of time, helps reduce diesel exhaust emissions, and saves school districts money.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency or institution.

ANALYSIS

This bill adds a new section to the Education Code to provide that the driver of a school bus equipped with a diesel engine may not allow the idling of the bus engine while the bus is parked at a school or school event. The bill does not prohibit idling for the minimum time necessary to heat or cool the bus before departure, providing that the engine is turned off when a student is embarking or disembarking.

This provision applies beginning with the 2007-2008 school year.

EFFECTIVE DATE

Upon passage, or, if the Act does not receive the necessary vote, the Act takes effect September 1, 2007.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL TO SUBSTITUTE

The original and the substitute do not differ substantially in content. The substitute bill was drafted by Legislative Council in accordance with its drafting guidelines. The caption, placement in the Education Code, effective date provisions, and in some respects wording are different, but substantively the bills achieve the same purpose.