

It's Time Congress Passed the Motorcoach Enhanced Safety Act (MESA), S.453/H.R.873

Every month of delay in issuing overdue safety standards puts millions of motorcoach passengers at unnecessary and unacceptable risk.

Motorcoaches are the Passenger Airlines of America's Highways

- 750 million motorcoach trips are taken each year, almost as many passenger trips as on commercial airplanes.
- Curbside motorcoach operators experienced ridership growth of at least 33 percent between 2009 and 2010, according to a 2010 DePaul University study.

Motorcoach Crashes, Fatalities and Injuries are a Serious and Costly Safety Problem

- In 2011 alone, there have been 20 motorcoach crashes resulting in 33 deaths and 380 injuries.
- In just the past three years, there have been over 90 motorcoach crashes resulting in more than 100 deaths.
- According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), on average, 7,887 people are injured and 19 killed in motorcoach crashes each year (1999 to 2008). The number of fatalities in the first five months of 2011 already exceeded this average.

Delay in Issuing Motorcoach Safety Standards is Contributing to Needless Deaths and Injuries

- For over 40 years, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) has investigated fatal motorcoach crashes and concluded that the lack of basic occupant protection features contributes to the severity of crashes. NTSB has made numerous recommendations, many of which appear on their *Most Wanted List*, to improve vehicle and operational safety. The NTSB safety recommendations have been repeatedly ignored by NHTSA and the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA).

"Contributing to the accident's severity was the lack of an adequate motorcoach occupant protection system, primarily due to NHTSA's delay in developing and promulgating standards to enhance the protection of motorcoach passengers."

-Findings from the NTSB's Accident Report of the January 6, 2008, Mexican Hat, Utah Motorcoach Crash

"If the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration had implemented the requirements for motorcoach occupant protection systems following the issuances of Safety Recommendations H-99-47, -48, -50, and -51 [regarding performance standards for occupant protection systems that account for collisions and rollovers, and enhanced roof strength], fewer injuries and fatalities might have occurred because more occupants might have been retained within the accident motorcoach."

-Findings from the NTSB's Accident Report of the August 8, 2008, Sherman, Texas Motorcoach Crash

Legislation is Needed to Correct Dangerous and Deadly Motorcoach Safety Problems

- The bipartisan Motorcoach Enhanced Safety Act (MESA), introduced by Senators Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-TX) and Representative John Lewis (D-GA), directs DOT to implement critical NTSB recommendations that have languished and been ignored for decades to:
 - Protect passengers in crashes by requiring basic safety systems like seat belts, advanced window glazing, tire pressure monitoring systems, enhanced roof strength, and rollover stability systems;
 - Require more rigorous safety inspections, oversight, and testing and training requirements to ensure only safe companies and safe drivers operate on our roads and highways.

S.453/H.R.873 Has Broad Support

- The bipartisan legislation is strongly supported by a broad range of consumer, health, and safety organizations including Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety (Advocates), the American Association of Classified School Employees, Consumer Federation of America, KIDS AND CARS, and parents and family members nationwide who have had children and relatives killed or injured in motorcoach crashes.
- “What Congress can and should do is establish common-sense safety standards designed to make crashes less likely, and decrease the death and injury toll when they occur.” –Editorial, *New York Times*, April 10, 2011
- “It’s time that bus safety...got a fresh look. Today, there are no minimum standards for behind-the-wheel training of new bus drivers. Nor are seat belts, recommended for years by federal safety watchdogs, required on buses.” -Editorial, *USA Today*, March 23, 2011
- “New rules will be needed for the buses themselves—and Congress may need to impose them, since federal regulators have failed to act on some common-sense recommendations...Congress should mandate ejection-proof windows and roofs that can withstand rollovers, measures contained in bipartisan Senate legislation introduced earlier this month, just days before the crash.” -Editorial, *The Boston Globe*, March 21, 2011

The Safety Technology Required by the MESA Bill is Already Available

- Major motorcoach manufacturers, such as Volvo, Prevost, MCI, Van Hool and others, already offer many of the safety features, including seat belts, enhanced roof strength, interior impact protection, electronic stability control systems, tire pressure monitoring systems, lane departure warning systems, fire suppression systems, and collision avoidance technologies, as standard equipment on newly-manufactured motorcoaches. These safety systems need to be on every new motorcoach.
- Companies like Greyhound have been purchasing new motorcoaches with seat belts since 2008.
- Australia has mandated three-point belts at all seats on motorcoaches since 1994, and the European Union mandated that passengers must wear safety belts on motorcoaches since May 2008.

MESA Safety Improvements Cost Just Pennies Per Passenger But Will Save Millions of Dollars

- The cost of equipping new motorcoaches with the safety improvements included in the MESA bill would cost about **10 cents per passenger**. *This is a BARGAIN*- Just one serious motorcoach crash, like the World Wide Travel motorcoach crash that took place in the Bronx, New York on March 12, 2011, killing 15 persons cost at least \$90 million (based on NHTSA data).
- Cost estimates from the American Bus Association are exaggerated. For example:

Safety Feature	Industry Claims	Actual Cost
Electronic Stability Control	\$3,000	\$1,350
Advanced Glazing	\$7,000	\$1,115
Electronic On Board Recorders	\$2,500	\$ 600
Fire Suppression Systems	\$6,000	\$3,000
Interior Fire Protection	\$11,000	\$ 500
Total	\$29,500	\$6,565

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