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October 22, 2015

NSTA Applauds the Surface Transportation Reauthorization and Reform Act

ALEXANDRIA, VA - The National School Transportation Association (NSTA) commends the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee for reporting the Surface Transportation Reauthorization and Reform Act of 2015 to reauthorize Federal surface transportation programs and advancing many of NSTA's priorities. "NSTA applauds the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee for reporting a bipartisan bill to reauthorize Federal surface transportation programs and including several significant provisions to resolve issues currently threatening the private school bus industry" states Todd Monteferrario, President of NSTA.

NSTA's highest priority issues addressed in the bill include provisions aimed at requiring more review before Federal minimum insurance requirements could be increased and significant reform of the Compliance Safety and Accountability (CSA) program. The bill requires the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) to conduct a comprehensive study of passenger carrier industries' accident and claims histories before being permitted to proceed to radically increase minimum insurance rates. The FMCSA has a pending rulemaking that could potentially increase school bus contractors' insurance rates by over 400% without any study or analysis of the issue. Since school buses are the very safest form of transportation according to DOT's own statistics, NSTA does not believe the agency has made a case that current levels of insurance are inadequate. NSTA also supports the bill's requirement for FMCSA to revise the methodology of the Compliance, Safety and Accountability (CSA) program and require outward facing scores to be taken down from public view until the reforms are completed. The erroneous and flawed data and scores made available to consumers without any ability to discern the safety fitness of a particular contractor has created great confusion and caused economic harm.

Other highlights of the bill that NSTA advocated for include significant reform to FMCSA's regulatory processes requiring more sunlight and ability for input by stakeholders particularly on major rules and guidance, modifications to the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality program to prioritize diesel retrofits and imposition of a significant financial penalty for one metropolitan region which has been legislatively exempted from enforcement of Federal charter service rules.

"NSTA thanks Chairman Bill Shuster, Subcommittee Chairman Sam Graves, Ranking Member Peter DeFazio, Ranking Subcommittee Member Eleanor Holmes Norton, Congressman Scott Perry and Congressman Lou Barletta for their leadership in producing a strong bipartisan bill that will ensure that the private school bus industry and the millions of children it transports to and from school safely every day, continue to thrive." states Ronna Sable Weber, Executive Director of NSTA.

NSTA looks forward to continuing to work with the Committee as it moves the bill forward.



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About NSTA:

The National School Transportation Association has been the voice of private school bus contractors, manufacturers and suppliers for over 50 years. The association provides school transportation professionals with the tools and resources they need to make school buses safe, affordable, and efficient nationwide. Offices are at 122 South Royal Street Alexandria, VA 22314. Phone: 703-684-3200. Fax: 703-684-3212.