

To the office of U.S. Senator Jack Reed

Re: S 5264 (119th Congress), Bus Operator Safety and Security Act • Latest action (2026-08-05): Read twice and referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs. (Sponsor introductory remarks on measure: CR S4478)
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Interstate Fixed-Route Bus Operator Workstation Safety Act

The measure, as described from the official record: Improve safety and ergonomics of operator workstations on fixed-route buses to reduce driver fatigue and accidents.

THE PROPOSAL

This Act applies only to fixed-route buses that are used in interstate commerce, defined as buses that cross state lines or operate on routes that regularly carry passengers or goods in interstate commerce, or that receive federal financial assistance for operations or equipment. The Secretary of Transportation shall, within 18 months of enactment, issue regulations requiring that operator workstations on such buses meet minimum ergonomic and safety standards, including adjustable seating, unobstructed visibility, and placement of controls to minimize driver distraction. The regulations shall be based on existing voluntary industry standards and shall not impose requirements that are more stringent than necessary to achieve a substantial effect on interstate safety. States may adopt more protective standards for buses not covered by this Act. This Act shall be funded through existing appropriations for the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, with a budget cap of \$5 million per year for rulemaking and enforcement. It shall sunset 10 years after the effective date, unless reauthorized by Congress. Oversight shall be conducted by the Inspector General of the Department of Transportation, who shall report annually on compliance and effectiveness. Enforcement shall be through civil penalties of up to \$10,000 per violation per bus, assessed against operators found to be in noncompliance after a reasonable notice-and-comment period.

OPERATIVE PROVISIONS (VFA PROPOSAL)

Funding Source	Existing appropriations for the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration
Funding Amount	\$5 million per year
Sunset Years	10 years
Oversight Body	Inspector General of the Department of Transportation
Enforcement Mechanism	Civil penalties up to \$10,000 per violation per bus, after notice and comment
Effective Date	180 days after enactment

CONSTITUTIONAL BASIS

- Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 (Commerce Clause)

- Tenth Amendment (reservation of powers to states)

Concerns with the measure as written:

- The original bill applies to all fixed-route buses, including those operating purely intrastate, which exceeds Congress's power under the Commerce Clause (Article I, Section 8, Clause 3) and intrudes on state police powers reserved by the Tenth Amendment.

WHY BOTH SIDES CAN BACK IT (VFA'S ASSESSMENT)

Democratic priorities: improved worker safety and reduced driver fatigue, supported by labor unions and safety advocates. Republican priorities: limited federal scope to interstate commerce, reliance on existing industry standards, state flexibility for intrastate buses, and a sunset provision to prevent permanent regulatory expansion.

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