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Senate Bill 614 (as introduced 10-10-13)
Sponsor: Senator Tom Casperson
Committee: Transportation

Date Completed: 10-14-13

CONTENT

The bill would amend the Pupil Transportation Act to allow the transportation of students to and from school on a motor bus certified by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) or operated by a public transit agency or authority.

Currently, a vehicle, other than a school bus, with a manufacturer's rated seating capacity of 11 or more passengers, may not be used to transport students to or from school-related events. A school district, however, may contract with a licensed motor carrier of passengers for a motor bus to be used for the occasional transportation of students to or from school-related events. A motor carrier that MDOT has certified may not use a motor bus to transport students to and from school.

Under the bill, students could be transported to or from school or school-related events on a motor bus certified by MDOT or a bus operated by a public transit agency or authority that had been inspected by the Department of State Police. A motor bus used to transport students to or from school or school-related events would have to meet or exceed applicable Federal motor safety standards (as currently required for each school bus that is owned or operated by a public or private nonpublic school, an agent of a school, a private business, or a unit of government).

The Act defines "school bus" as a motor vehicle with a manufacturer's rated seating capacity of 11 or more passengers, including the driver, used for the transportation of preprimary, primary, or secondary school pupils to or from school or school-related events or a multifunction school activity bus manufactured after September 2, 2003. The term does not include a vehicle operated by a public transit agency or authority. Under the bill, "school bus" also would not include a motor bus.

Currently, a vehicle that is not a school bus is not subject to the Act. Under the bill, this would apply except as provided above.

("Motor bus" means that term as defined in the Motor Bus Transportation Act, i.e., a self-propelled motor vehicle used in the transportation of passengers and their baggage for hire upon any public highway of this State with a maximum seating capacity of 16 passengers or more.

"Motor carrier of passengers" means that term as defined in the Motor Bus Transportation Act. The term generally means a person who holds himself or herself out to the public as available for hire to transport people, or to transport packages, baggage, newspapers, or U.S. mail in the same vehicle used to transport passengers.)

MCL 257.1807 et al.

Legislative Analyst: Glenn Steffens

FISCAL IMPACT

Expanding the options available to local districts for pupil transportation could yield opportunities for savings, but any potential savings would be indeterminate and would depend upon the situation facing a local district in terms of available pupil transportation. A district would have to compare the costs of providing transportation on school-owned buses to the costs associated with contracting for the transportation on motor buses or buses operated by a public transit agency or authority.

Fiscal Analyst: Kathryn Summers

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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.