

Testimony in Support of LD 2159

An Act to Require School Buses to Be Equipped With and to Use School Bus Crossing Arms

Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Alisa Roman, I am the Director of Transportation and Nutrition for Lewiston Public Schools. I am writing in strong support of LD 2159, *An Act to Require School Buses to Be Equipped With and to Use School Bus Crossing Arms*.

The safety of students must always be our highest priority, especially during the most dangerous moments of the school day—boarding and exiting the school bus. Crossing arms are a proven safety device designed to ensure that students cross several feet in front of the bus, where the driver has a clear line of sight. This significantly reduces the risk of students entering the bus's danger zone, where they may be hidden from view.

Young children are particularly vulnerable. They may drop an item, trip, or act impulsively near traffic. Crossing arms create a physical and visual reminder that keeps students at a safer distance from the bus and helps drivers maintain constant visual contact. This simple but effective tool adds an important layer of protection during student loading and unloading.

In addition to protecting students, crossing arms also improve safety for motorists by clearly signaling that children may be crossing in front of the bus. In an era when distracted driving is an increasing concern, visible and consistent safety equipment is essential.

Many states and school districts already require crossing arms because they are recognized as a best practice in pupil transportation safety. LD 2159 ensures consistent safety standards across Maine, rather than leaving this critical decision to individual districts with varying resources.

While there is an associated cost to equipping buses with crossing arms, the cost of inaction—measured in preventable injuries or loss of life—is far greater. Investing in proven safety equipment is a responsible and necessary use of public funds.

In Lewiston we currently transport over 7,387 students daily. This includes up to 190 trips daily. Having the highest level of safety for our students is crucial to our operations.

LD 2159 is a proactive, commonsense measure that prioritizes student safety and demonstrates Maine's commitment to protecting children on their way to and from school. I urge the committee to support this legislation and move it forward with a favorable recommendation. I am also available for additional comments or questions if needed by the Committee.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Alisa Roman

Director of Transportation and Nutrition

Lewiston, Maine

