

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

My name is Kayla Denaco, and 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*.

As one of the largest school districts in Maine, we transport 7,387 students every day. Their safety must always be our highest priority—especially during the most dangerous moments of the school day: boarding and exiting the school bus. Recent tragedies have made it painfully clear that our current measures are not enough. When children are harmed in preventable ways, it is a call to action. LD 2159 represents an important step forward, though it should not be the last step we take to improve school bus safety.

School bus crossing arms are a proven safety device designed to ensure students cross several feet in front of the bus, where drivers have a clear and unobstructed line of sight. This reduces the risk of students entering the bus's danger zone, where they may be hidden from view and vulnerable to serious injury.

Young children are especially at risk. They may drop something, stumble, or act impulsively near traffic. Crossing arms provide both a physical barrier and a strong visual cue, reinforcing safe crossing behavior while allowing drivers to maintain constant visual contact. It is a simple, effective tool that adds a critical layer of protection during loading and unloading.

Crossing arms also enhance safety for motorists by clearly signaling that children may be crossing in front of the bus. At a time when distracted driving continues to rise, consistent and highly visible safety equipment is more important than ever.

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

While there is a cost associated with 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 not only responsible; it is necessary.

LD 2159 is a proactive, commonsense measure that places student safety first and demonstrates Maine's commitment to protecting children on their way to and from school. I respectfully urge the committee to support this legislation and move it forward with a favorable recommendation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Kayla Denaco

Kayla Denaco  
Lewiston  
LD 2159

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