



Teresa Schmitt Pierce
Senator, District 25
Senate Majority Leader

THE MAINE SENATE
132nd Legislature

6 Waites Landing Road
Falmouth, ME 04105

*Testimony of Senator Teresa S. Pierce presenting
LD 2062, An Act to Enhance the Safety of Public Transit Bus Operators Through the
Installation of Vehicle Security Barriers
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation
January 15, 2026*

Good morning, Chair Nangle, Chair Crafts and esteemed colleagues of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation. My name is Teresa Pierce, I serve as the State Senator from District 25, which includes Falmouth, Cumberland, North Yarmouth, Gray, part of Yarmouth and Long Island. I also have the privilege of serving as the Senate Majority Leader. Thank you for the opportunity to present LD 2062, “An Act to Enhance the Safety of Public Transit Bus Operators Through the Installation of Vehicle Security Barriers.”

LD 2062 seeks to protect Maine public transit employees from violence and harassment from riders by requiring public transit entities that operate public transit buses to install barriers. The bill also creates the Public Transit Bus Operator Safety Fund within the Department of Transportation to provide grants to public transit agencies to install the barriers. Assaults on public transit workers have increased dramatically since the beginning of the pandemic, but we can protect Maine’s public transit workers with a relatively modest investment.

Over the last few months, I’ve continued to work with a variety of stakeholders on this issue, and together, we’ve crafted the sponsor’s amendment to clarify the definitions and which types of transit vehicles would be covered under this bill.

This amendment clarifies that the following classes of vehicles are **not** required to install barriers:

1. Vehicles where a bus body is mounted on the chassis of a van or of a light-duty or medium-duty truck.
2. Paratransit vehicles and the smaller vehicles like the ones operated by rural transit agencies.
3. Vehicles used on seasonal routes that run for less than 5 months per year
4. The seasonal trolleys, ski shuttles, and buses that service tourists through parks.

Today, you will hear from a number of industry experts, advocates and other stakeholders who will provide their unique experience on why these barriers are needed to protect the drivers who keep our state moving.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this bill and continue this important conversation. I would be happy to answer any questions.

An Act to Enhance the Safety of Public Transit Bus Operators Through the Installation of Vehicle Security Barriers

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 23 MRSA §4209-B is enacted to read:

§4209-B. Public transit bus vehicle security barriers

1. Short title. This section may be known and cited as "the Public Transit Bus Operator Safety Act."

2. Definitions. As used in this section, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following terms have the following meanings.

A. "Fund" means the Public Transit Bus Operator Safety Fund established in subsection 4.

B. "Public transit agency" means an entity, including a municipal, regional or state authority, that operates public transportation services within the State.

C. "Public transit bus" means a motor vehicle, as defined in Title 29-A, section 101, subsection 42, that is designed to carry more than 15 persons, including the public transit bus operator, and that is operated by a public transit agency or by a private company contracted to provide public transit service on behalf of a public transit agency, except for those vehicles in which a bus body is mounted on the chassis of a van or of a light-duty or medium-duty truck. A vehicle that is used on seasonal routes that run for less than 5 months per year is not considered a public transit bus.

D. "Public transit bus operator" means an individual employed to operate a public transit bus.

E. "Vehicle security barrier" means a transparent, protective partition made of hard, durable materials that:

(1) Is capable of fully enclosing the public transit bus operator's workstation and of preventing the unwanted entry of individuals, fluids and objects into the workstation;

(2) Does not impede the public transit bus operator's lines of sight from the workstation to the exterior of the public transit bus; and

(3) Allows the public transit bus operator to maintain communications with passengers.

3. Mandatory installation of vehicle security barriers. In accordance with the timeline and standards established under this subsection, a public transit agency shall install or arrange for the installation of vehicle security barriers in all public transit buses.

A. The department, in consultation with public transit agencies, labor organizations representing public transit bus operators and joint labor-management safety committees, if any, shall establish through rulemaking minimum standards for vehicle security barriers meeting the requirements set forth in Maine Revised Statutes, Title 23, section 4209-B, subsection 2(E). Such standards must address the design, materials and installation specifications of vehicle security barriers.

B. When procuring vehicle security barriers and any other materials funded by the fund, a public transit agency shall consult with solicit and incorporate input from a labor organization representing the public transit agency's public transit bus operators. Such solicitation must occur via and a joint labor-management safety committee, if the public transit agency is party to such a committee.

C. A public transit bus that does not have a vehicle security barrier installed may not be operated or after August 1, 2029.

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4. Public Transit Bus Operator Safety Fund. The Public Transit Bus Operator Safety Fund is established within the department as a nonlapsing fund to provide grants to public transit agencies for the purchase, installation and maintenance of vehicle security barriers. Beginning August 1, 2029, the fund may provide grants to public transit agencies for expenditures, other than for vehicle security barriers, to improve transit bus operator safety, and a public transit agency may apply for such a grant as determined for purposes that are selected as determined jointly by the public transit agency and a labor organization representing public transit bus operators. Such selection must occur via and a joint labor-management safety committee, if the public transit agency is party to such a committee any. The fund consists of money received as appropriations, allocations and contributions from public and private sources.

5. Reporting requirements. Before August 1, 2027, 2028 and 2029, each public transit agency shall submit an annual report to the department regarding the progress of the public transit agency in installing vehicle security barriers as required by this section. Each report must set forth the steps that the public transit agency has taken to comply with the requirements to install vehicle security barriers, the tasks remaining for the public transit agency to complete in order to achieve full compliance and an estimated completion date for each of these tasks. The department shall make the reports required under this subsection available to the public within 30 days of receiving the reports.

6. Rules. The department shall adopt rules to implement this section. Rules adopted pursuant to this subsection are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

Sec. 2. Department of Transportation to establish standards for vehicle security barriers in public transit buses. Before February 1, 2027, the Department of Transportation shall establish through rulemaking minimum standards for vehicle security barriers in public transit buses in accordance with the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 23, section 4209-B, subsection 3.

Sec. 3. Appropriations and allocations. The following appropriations and allocations are made.
TRANSPORTATION, DEPARTMENT OF

Public Transit Bus Operator Safety Fund N559

Initiative: Provides one-time funding to the Public Transit Bus Operator Safety Fund within the Department of Transportation to provide grants to public transit agencies for the purchase, installation and maintenance of vehicle security barriers.

	2025-26	2026-27
All Other	\$0	\$2,000,000
GENERAL FUND TOTAL	\$0	\$2,000,000

SUMMARY

This bill requires public transit agencies, including municipal, regional and state authorities, that operate public transportation services within the State to install vehicle security barriers that enclose the public transit bus operator's workstation and prevent the unwanted entry of individuals, fluids and objects into the workstation. The bill directs the Department of Transportation to establish minimum standards for vehicle security barriers and establishes the Public Transit Bus Operator Safety Fund to provide grants to public transit agencies for the purchase, installation and maintenance of vehicle security barriers. Beginning August 1, 2029, the fund may also provide grants for expenditures to improve public transit bus operator safety. In establishing minimum standards and other uses of the fund, the bill requires consultation with labor organizations representing public transit bus operators and joint labor-management safety committees.