



# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2 STATE HOUSE STATION  
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002  
(207) 287-1400  
TTY: MAINE RELAY 711

**Valli Geiger**

Phone: (207) 956-1565

[Valli.Geiger@legislature.maine.gov](mailto:Valli.Geiger@legislature.maine.gov)

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*Testimony of Rep. Valli Geiger presenting*

## **LD 2159, An Act to Require School Buses to Be Equipped with and to Use School Bus Crossing Arms**

*Before the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation*

Good afternoon, Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation. My name is Valli Geiger, and I represent House District 42, which includes the city of Rockland, most of the town of Owls Head and the Islands of North Haven, Criehaven, Matinicus and the Muscle Ridge. I am here today to present **LD 2159, An Act to Require School Buses to Be Equipped with and to Use School Bus Crossing Arms**.

On November 21, 2025, our community suffered a terrible tragedy when a twelve-year-old boy was run over as he was crossing in front of his school bus. Despite immediate medical assistance, he died of his injuries. This tragedy was preventable, and LD 2159 works to minimize the risk of this tragic event ever happening again.

This original bill is a result of a meeting with myself, Sen. Beebe-Center, Rep. Matlack and the RSU 13 school district personnel after their investigation and a preliminary report indicating the cause of death was released by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB). I will suggest two minor changes to the bill as written. In her testimony, Rep. Matlack will provide a significant amendment to the bill which will address the cause of the second preventable death of a five-year-old school kindergarten student in Standish, which happened just a few weeks later. At the time this bill was drafted, the NTSB report had not been released establishing the events of the death of the second student.

The bill in its original form does two things: it requires all school buses to be equipped with a school bus crossing arm and it requires the operator of a school bus to activate the school bus crossing arm while the bus is stopped to receive or discharge passengers. For those unfamiliar with the term, a crossing arm is a long bar attached to the front right side of a school bus. When engaged it extends from the bus for several feet forcing a student to walk several feet in front of the bus, ensuring that the driver can see the student. The crossing arm costs approximately \$400 plus installation.

While the bus involved in the accident in Rockland did have a crossing arm, preliminary reports suggest it was not in use at the time the student crossed the bus. He started to cross directly in front of the bus as the bus started to move, knocking him down and subsequently running him over with both front and back tires. The driver was unaware until alerted by others.

House District 42: Criehaven Township, Matinicus Isle Plantation,  
Muscle Ridge Islands, North Haven, part of Owls Head and the city of Rockland

The two minor changes I would suggest to this bill:

1. An exception to the requirement that the crossing arm be in use when admitting or discharging students from the bus while on school property. When buses line up, one after the other, in the school driveway at the beginning and end of the day, they park within two-three feet of each other. To extend the crossing arm will make this impossible and is unnecessary as all students are entering or exiting directly onto the sidewalk next to the school entrance and do not need to cross in front of their school bus.
2. This is an emergency bill, necessary to ensure that school districts have clear direction as soon as possible. It is not our intention to declare most school bus districts out of compliance with the law the day the bill is signed by the Governor. Rather, we suggest adding a sentence to the bill that requires all buses to be retrofit with a crossing arm and an additional safety measure, which Rep Matlack will discuss, by the start of the 2026-2027 school year. This will allow time for school districts to order the safety equipment and arrange for installation for what are hundreds of buses.

Thank you for allowing me to present this life saving bill, and I hope you will unanimously vote 'Ought to Pass.' I am happy to take any questions.