

LD 2159

Alicia Sessions

Chair, members of the committee,

Brayden and Simon left home with backpacks on, excited for school — parents waving from the door, just like every other day.

Nothing felt different. Nothing felt dangerous.

They climbed onto a school bus believing it would bring them home.

It didn't.

Brayden. Forever 12. Simon. Forever 5.

In just 26 days, two innocent children were taken from this world. Two families destroyed. Two childhoods ended.

Maine does have school bus safety laws, but they have not kept pace with modern safety technology and leave critical protections optional.

This bill does not replace existing law. It closes a gap that became tragically clear with the loss of Brayden and Simon.

If school buses had been equipped with these safety features, these two beautiful children would be here today.

The cost of this equipment is nothing compared to the cost these families now carry for the rest of their lives.

Without change, another child will be lost. That is not speculation — it is history repeating itself.

Insurance costs rise. Lawsuits cost far more than prevention.

Both deaths were preventable. And now that we know that, choosing not to act becomes a decision.

This bill sets a minimum safety standard for these protections.

Families cannot install these protections themselves. Only lawmakers can.

Please vote yes. Require the arm bar. Require the safety systems.

Because every child deserves to leave home — and come back alive.