

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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Office of
The Governor

NO. 4 FY 25/26
DATE January 20, 2026

**An Order Establishing the
Maine School Transportation Safety Commission**

WHEREAS, Maine has recently experienced the tragic deaths of two students in transportation-related incidents; and

WHEREAS, thousands of Maine students rely on school transportation each day to attend school and school-related activities; and

WHEREAS, these recent tragedies warrant a comprehensive review to ensure that current laws, regulations, and operating practices continue to protect students effectively; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Public Safety, Department of Education and the Secretary of State share joint responsibility for supporting and enforcing safe transportation policies across the State; and

WHEREAS, the safety and well-being of children is a paramount responsibility of school transportation operations in Maine; and

WHEREAS, these tragic losses underscore the urgent need to evaluate existing policies, infrastructure, standards, and training practices; and

WHEREAS, data-driven analyses and expert review are essential to identifying risk factors, implementing effective safety measures, and preventing future accidents; and

WHEREAS, proactive measures can help prevent future tragedies and reaffirm the State's commitment to protecting students;

NOW THEREFORE I, Janet T. Mills, Governor of the State of Maine, pursuant to the authority conferred by ME Const. Art. V, Pt. 1, §§ 1 & 12 do hereby Order as follows:

I. Commission Established; Purpose

The Maine School Transportation Safety Commission (“Commission”) is hereby established. The purpose of the Commission is to:

- A. Review current statutes and regulations related to safety standards, protocols, and school bus driver training and ensure clear communication of these requirements to all school districts;
- B. Produce an updated set of best practices for school bus safety and disseminate it to all school districts;
- C. Identify changes or improvements needed in school transportation rules to ensure the safety and well-being of all students, staff, and drivers;
- D. Identify school bus safety features that can be installed, upgraded, or replaced, including door anti-pinch sensors and control (crossing) arms;
- E. Encourage and assist school districts in the effective communication of school bus safety information to students and families;
- F. Confirm that school districts have a process to complete, on a semi-annual basis, school bus safety training checklists; and
- G. Identify training needs for bus drivers and a mechanism for this training to be provided to all school transportation units.

II. Membership

The Commission shall consist of the following members:

- A. The Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety or the Commissioner’s designee, who shall serve as co-chair;
- B. The Commissioner of the Department of Education or the Commissioner’s designee, who shall serve as co-chair;
- C. The head of the Maine School Safety Center;
- D. The Board President and Vice President of the Maine Association for Pupil Transportation;
- E. The Commissioner of the Department of Transportation or the Commissioner’s designee;
- F. A member designated by the Commissioner of the Department of Education who is currently serving as a transportation director for a school administrative unit; and
- G. A representative of the Maine School Management Association; and
- H. A representative from the Maine School Safety Center with expertise in pupil transportation.
- I. The Secretary of State or her designee is invited to participate as a member of the Commission.

III. Funding, Staffing and Report

- A. The Department of Public Safety and the Department of Education shall provide such staff as may be necessary to fulfill the Commission's charge within existing resources. The Commission may seek staffing and support from other state agencies to accomplish its goals. Members of the Commission shall serve without compensation.
- B. The Commission shall issue a public report of its findings to the Governor and the State Legislature no later than April 30, 2026.

Date: 1/20/26



Janet T. Mills
Governor