

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

H.B. 2043
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Education
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Engrossed

DIGEST AND PURPOSE

Current law requires a school bus or mass transit authority motor bus to be used for the transportation of 10 or more students to and from school. School buses are also currently required to meet or exceed safety standards established by the Department of Public Safety with the advice of the General Services Commission (GSC) and the Texas Education Agency. H.B. 2043 requires a school or motor bus that is put into use transporting students on or after September 1, 2001, to meet specifications adopted by GSC.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

H.B. 2043 amends the Education Code to replace provisions relating to safety standards established by the Department of Public Safety (DPS) for school buses used to transport students. The bill requires a school bus used to transport public school students that is owned and operated by a school district or that is privately owned and operated under a contract with a school district to comply with the specifications adopted by the General Services Commission (GSC) that are in effect on the date the school bus is manufactured. This provision does not apply to a school-chartered motor bus or a mass transit authority motor bus and does not apply to a bus purchased, rented, leased, or chartered, or bus services contracted for before September 1, 2001. A bus in use on September 1, 2001, that does not meet the specifications adopted by GSC is authorized to continue in use until the earlier of September 1, 2006, or the end of the term of a contract for the use of the bus. A school district that initiates the operation of a school bus on or after September 1, 2001 in violation of the specifications is ineligible to receive a transportation allotment until the first anniversary of the date the district begins to comply with GSC specifications. School buses that comply with specifications adopted by GSC or mass transit authority motor buses operating under contract with a school district are required to be used for transportation of 10 or more students on routes to and from schools. For fewer than 10 students, the bill authorizes the use of a passenger car.

The bill amends the Transportation Code to require the General Services Commission, with the advice of DPS and the Texas Education Agency, to adopt and enforce specifications, rather than rules, governing the construction and design, color, and lighting and other equipment of a school bus used to transport public school students.

Effective date: September 1, 2001.