SEAT BELTS IN NEW SCHOOL BUSES

WHEREAS, There were at least 62,000 school bus passenger injuries and 51 fatalities during the period 1991 – 1996; and

WHEREAS, Research has concluded that high backed padded seats and seat belts together improve overall bus passenger safety by providing true compartmentalization in accidents, especially side impacts and rollovers; and

WHEREAS, School buses manufactured after 1997 may be safely and effectively equipped with seat belts, as has been done in New York, New Jersey and many school districts across the nation; and

WHEREAS, A large Type 1 school bus (66 passengers) can be equipped with seat belts for an additional $1,100 - $1,600; and

WHEREAS, The use of seat belt does not significantly increase evacuation time, and current seat belt buckle design coupled with education on evacuation helps ensure that no child of school age will be trapped in a bus by their seat belt; and

WHEREAS, Seat belts in school buses are endorsed by the American Medical Association, Physicians for Automotive Safety, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the College of Preventative Medicine, the Association of Oral and Maxillo Facial Surgery, the American Society for Adolescent Medicine, and the American College of Emergency Physicians; and

WHEREAS, Availability and use of seat belts on school buses will reinforce the importance of the safety habit of buckling up; and

WHEREAS, Students who are properly belted in are less distracting to the school bus driver; and

WHEREAS, Districts with strong seat belt use, education and enforcement policies report significant compliance at all grade levels; and

WHEREAS, A strong seat belt use policy will significantly reduce fatal actions such as putting one’s head or arm out of a school bus window, or falling out of a school bus door, by school bus passengers; now therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Tennessee PTA shall support legislation or regulation requiring any new bus purchased for the purpose of transporting school children to be equipped with seat belts; and further be it
RESOLVED, That the Tennessee PTA shall encourage all school districts to
implement strong seat belt use, education and enforcement policies.

Adopted by the 1999 Convention Delegates

Referred to Health and Safety Committee – November, 2003