

ASSEMBLY APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

[First Reprint]

ASSEMBLY, No. 1567

with Assembly committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 3, 1996

The Assembly Appropriations Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 1567 (1R), with committee amendments.

Assembly Bill No. 1567 (1R), as amended, requires the installation of a crossing control arm on all school buses. A crossing control arm is a safety device which is attached to the right front corner of a school bus. Each time the bus door is opened, the arm extends outward from the front of the bus. Its purpose is to prevent children who must cross the street after exiting the bus from walking too close to the front where the driver may be unable to see them.

The bill provides that each school district which owns and operates its own buses and any school bus contractor will receive reimbursement from the Department of Education of up to \$300 per bus for the cost of equipping school buses currently in operation with a crossing control arm and of up to \$200 new buses.

The bill phases this new requirement in over two years, with priority in the first year given to buses used to transport elementary school students.

FISCAL IMPACT:

In the legislative fiscal estimate to this bill, the Office of Legislative Services estimated a cost to the State in the amount of approximately \$3.6 million to reimburse districts and school bus contractors up to \$300 for each bus fitted with the crossing control arm. This was based on information from the Department of Education that 12,000 school buses would need the crossing control arm. The department has stated that there are approximately 1,000 new buses purchased annually which would account for an additional annual cost of approximately \$200,000.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The amendments provide for the two year phase in of the crossing control arm requirement, provide for up to a \$200 per bus reimbursement for new buses, establish a priority for buses transporting elementary school students, and clarify that the control arm requirement applies to buses used to transport nonpublic school pupils.