



Missouri House of Representatives

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Missouri House Passes Legislation to Ease Requirements for Senior School Bus Drivers

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. – The Missouri House of Representatives this week approved HB 1626, a measure aimed at addressing the shortage of school bus drivers by modifying the existing regulations for individuals aged 77 and older with school bus endorsements on their driver's licenses.

Under current law, individuals aged 70 and older face annual license renewal, waived fees, mandatory yearly school bus license examinations, and the issuance of a commercial driver's license with a school bus endorsement on an annual basis. HB 1626 seeks to increase the age threshold for these provisions to 77 or older.

The bill reflects a bipartisan effort to streamline the process for senior citizens willing to contribute to their communities as school bus drivers. Supporters argue that the change will alleviate the burden on retired individuals and encourage more participation in the essential role of school bus driving.

Speaking on the House floor, the bill sponsor, Rep. Danny Busick, emphasized that local school officials are better positioned to assess an individual's fitness for the role of a school bus driver, advocating for a more flexible approach rather than a one-size-fits-all legislative mandate.

"Our current statutes are discriminate against experienced drivers, not based on ability, but based on age alone," Busick, R-Newtown, said. "With this bill, we are opening up an available labor pool for drivers in communities throughout Missouri."

"The passage of HB 1626 is a testament to the House's commitment to finding practical solutions to pressing issues," House Speaker Dean Plocher, R-Des Peres, said. "Adjusting regulations for senior citizens with school bus endorsements not only addresses the current shortage but also opens doors for experienced individuals who wish to play a vital role in our communities."

The emergency clause included in HB 1626 underscores the urgency of addressing the shortage of school bus drivers in the state. This clause allows for swift implementation of the new provisions, demonstrating the legislature's commitment to prompt action.

The bill will now proceed to the Missouri Senate for further consideration. If passed into law, HB 1626 is poised to make a positive impact on the recruitment and retention of school bus drivers, ensuring the safe transportation of students across the state.

Representative Danny Busick, a Republican, represents the counties of Sullivan, Mercer, Putnam and the western part of Adair (District 3) in the Missouri House of Representatives. He was elected to his first two-year term in November 2018. For more information, please contact Rep. Busick's office at 573-751-3647 or by email at Danny.Busick@House.Mo.Gov.

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