



STATE OF ALABAMA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 31, 2013

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CHARLES “CHUCK” POLAND JR., ACT SIGNED INTO LAW

Trespassing on a school bus now classified as a misdemeanor

Montgomery, Ala. — A person who stops or delays a school bus in an unauthorized manner could face jail time under a new law named in honor of the Midland City bus driver who died while protecting the children he transported to and from school each day.

The Charles “Chuck” Poland Jr., Act, passed recently by the Alabama Legislature and signed into law by Governor Robert Bentley, now makes it a Class “A” misdemeanor to trespass on a school bus. Such offenses include a punishment of up to a year in jail.

Poland was fatally shot on January 29, 2013, when a gunman boarded his bus and Poland refused his demand to hand over two children. Due to Poland’s heroic actions, all but one student escaped. The gunman took that child to an underground bunker, from which he was rescued unharmed after a six-day standoff.

Alabama Sen. Cam Ward, R-Alabaster, and State Rep. Alan Baker, R-Brewton, were instrumental in introducing the bills that led to the legislation. Alabama State Department of Education Pupil Transportation Director Joe Lightsey commended the lawmakers for their hard work on behalf of the state’s students and drivers, noting that unauthorized entry on Alabama school buses has increased dramatically in recent years.

“All too often, unauthorized persons have boarded school buses and threatened or assaulted students and school bus drivers. Current trespass laws do not specifically address the unauthorized entry of a school bus,” Lightsey said. “The Charles ‘Chuck’ Poland, Jr. Act specifically addresses the issue of trespassing on an Alabama school bus and will help school systems protect students and school bus drivers by vigorously prosecuting persons who do so.”

A person commits the crime of trespass on a school bus in the first degree if they are found guilty of any of the following:

- Intentionally demolishing, destroying, defacing, injuring, burning or damaging any public school bus.

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- Entering a public school bus while the door is open to load or unload students without lawful purpose while at a railroad grade crossing or after being forbidden from doing so by the bus driver in charge of the bus or an authorized school official.
- As an occupant of a public school bus, refusing to leave the bus after the bus driver in charge of the bus or authorized school official demands that they do so.
- Intentionally stopping, impeding, delaying or detaining any school bus from being operated for public school purposes with the intent to commit a crime.

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