

## **S.C.I.D.**

### *Supporting Victims of Road Crashes*

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The Public Petitions Committee  
The Scottish Parliament  
EH 99 1SP

12<sup>th</sup> January 2009

Dear Committee members and Committee clerks,

#### **PE1223**

**Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to take all appropriate action, whether through amending guidance, contracts, agreements or legislation, to require local authorities to install proper safety signage and lights on school buses, to be used only when school children are on the bus when necessary, and make overtaking a stationary school bus a criminal offence.**

I am writing to you on behalf of SCID to add our support to the above petition at the Scottish Parliament.

At SCID we are sadly only too aware of the consequences of death or injury following children boarding or alighting school buses. The devastation following any young person's death is a total tragedy for that family to cope with but when that death was avoidable; the family never recover. The life changing consequences following serious injury are impossible to describe and put into words; many a young child has to face years of painful surgery in an attempt to give some mobility and allow them, if successful, to engage in some sort of life.

Children are among the most vulnerable of road users. From the latest available figures there were 1,809 child casualties reported in 2007 of which 873 were child **pedestrian** casualties<sup>1</sup> There appears to be no published information as to how many of these children were casualties from school buses or coaches.

We totally endorse all aspects of the above petition and in particular the use of proper safety signage which is highly visible with lights to alert drivers of the purpose of the bus (the present yellow sign on the rear of buses and coaches is little bigger than an A4 sheet and is often dirty and in many cases has fallen over). These recommendations in the petition are devolved matters and only require political will to enforce.

<sup>1</sup>Key 2007 Road Accident Statistics

A new crime of overtaking a school bus is a long overdue. This matter has been the subject of adjournment debates at Westminster time and time again. Children will inevitably take the shortest possible route to their destination and in our experience this means crossing the front of the school bus and in some cases, to meet with an overtaking vehicle. Many of these casualties are exacerbated by drivers who are exceeding the speed limit of 30mph. We were disappointed that the opportunity to implement a new offence was not seized in the passage of the Road Safety Bill. We urge the Scottish Government to seek an amendment to the Road Safety Act (2006); to introduce a new offence which would make it illegal to overtake a stationary school bus or coach.

Yours sincerely,

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