



LASTO
Spring Conference
March 4-6, 2015

ACT 654
Summary



- ACT 654

- [ACT 654 LASTO Suggested Changes during Spring 2015 Legislative Session - GJR 1.22.15.pdf](#)
- [15RS-48 Draft - By Rep. Abramson - GJR 2.27.15.pdf](#)



- **ACT 654 (HB 600)**
 - Suggested changes by LASTO member representatives:
 1. Line 12 – insert “school”
 2. Line 14 – insert “school”
 3. Line 15 – insert “school” and “an active”
 4. Line 16 – delete “on a shoulder, in a school parking lot, or at other”
 5. Line 17 – insert “in an” and change road to “street”
 6. Line 18 – insert “travel lane or”
 7. Line 19 – change road to “street” and delete “and the municipality has not made”
 8. Line 20 – delete “the shoulder available by designating that area for loading and unloading students”



- ACT 654 (HB 600) - continued
 - Suggested changes by LASTO member representatives:
 9. Line 21 – insert “and (b) if vehicular traffic is prevented from moving on the street during school bus loading and unloading activities by deployment of school bus stop signs and flashing red stop lights.
 10. Line 22 – delete “Prohibit a bus driver from loading or unloading students at or near their”
 11. Line 23 – delete “homes while the bus is in a traffic lane of any type of street as defined in R.S. 32:1”
 12. Line 24 – delete “and require that students be loaded and unloaded on a shoulder. However, if there is”
 13. Line 1 – delete “no shoulder, a”; insert “A school”; delete “a student”; insert” at the designated school”



- ACT 654 (HB 600) - continued
 - Suggested changes by LASTO member representatives:
 14. Line 2 – delete “so that the”
 15. Line 3 – delete “student does not need to cross any lane of traffic to get onto or off of the bus.”
 16. Line 4 – insert “school”
 17. Line 5 – insert “the designated school bus stop; delete “or near their homes”; insert “more than two”
 18. Line 6 – delete “state”



- Study to determine impact to East Baton Rouge Parish School System

- This likely will be similar to all districts in Louisiana

Westdale Middle School	Before ACT 654	After ACT 654	Delta
Total Number of Routes	19 routes	35 routes	84.2%
Total Number of Stops	205 stops	403 stops	96.6%
Average Stop Time	37 minutes	34 minutes	-8.1%
Average Students Per Route	36 students	22 students	-38.9%
Average Number of Stops Per Route	11 stops	12 stops	9.1%



- Senator Murray response to changes:
 - Met with Senator Edwin Murray and Attorney Domoine Rutledge February 19, 2015 at the Louisiana State Capital
 - Shared with Senator Murray the changes previously described
 - Senator Murray agreed the changes are necessary and committed to share the LASTO proposal with Representative Abramson (original author)
 - Senator Murray made no further commitment at that time



- Additional information

- Received an email from Attorney Dannie P. Garrett, III proposing the following language to ACT 654 on behalf of Representative Abramson:

- (2) **Prohibit a bus driver from loading or unloading students** at or near their homes while the bus is in a traffic lane of any type of street as defined in R.S. 32:1 and require that students be loaded or unloaded on a shoulder. However, if there is no shoulder, a bus driver may load and unload a student while the bus is in a lane of traffic but only if the bus is in the lane farthest to the right side of the road **so that the student does not need to cross any lane of traffic on which a driver of a vehicle is not required to stop for the school bus as provided in R.S. 32:80(C) to get onto or off of the bus.**



- Additional information (cont.)
 - Received an email from Attorney Dannie P. Garrett, III proposing the following language to ACT 654 on behalf of Representative Abramson:
 - R.S. 32:80(C): The driver of a vehicle upon a highway with separate roadways need not stop upon meeting or passing a school bus which is on a different roadway or when upon a controlled access highway and the school bus is stopped in a loading zone which is a part of or adjacent to such highway and where pedestrians are not permitted to cross the roadway.
 - R.S. 32:80 A.(1): The driver of a vehicle upon a highway meeting or overtaking from any direction any school bus that has stopped for the purpose of receiving or discharging any school children shall stop the vehicle not less than thirty feet from the school bus before reaching such school bus when there are in operation on said school bus visual signals as required by R.S. 32:318, and said driver shall not proceed until such bus resumes motion or the visual signals are no longer activated.



- **Message sent to Attorney Domoine Rutledge:**

Were you able to have Mr. Garrett reconsider the shoulder issue? I believe this will create the following additional safety issues and other agency concerns:

- 1. DOTD has indicated that a shoulder is not designed as robust as a travel lane of a street and therefore will not support, over time, the repetitive use and weight of a school bus with students (approximate weight with students - 39,550 pounds).
- 2. In many cases, stepping off the bus from the shoulder will have the student getting off with a ditch in close proximity or other unstable ground.
- 3. Law enforcement has indicated that once a school bus has moved from the travel lane onto the shoulder, vehicles are no longer obligated to stop for the stop arms and can pass the bus. If this is a two lane road, based on the proposed changes cited above, students would be allowed to cross; however, there would be no stop arm to help protect them. This is a real conflict and an extreme danger.
- **RESOLUTION: Remove the requirement to load/unload on the shoulder. Reference these suggested changes in the attached, section J.(1) and section J.(2).**



Thanks to the following:

1. LASTO members that completed the survey regarding ACT 654
2. LASTO members that provided other feedback and suggestions to proposed adjustments to ACT 654
3. Special thanks to the following LASTO members that met on short notice to discuss the proposed adjustments:
 - a. Raymond Noël, Jr. – LASTO President, New Iberia Parish
 - b. Steve Vales – LASTO member, St. John the Baptist Parish
 - c. Kathy Gonzales – LASTO member, St. Bernard Parish
 - d. George Horne – LASTO member, Transportation Consultant/Authority



- LASTO Status:
 - Registered with IRS as non-profit
 - Federal Tax ID
 - Contacted Louisiana Secretary of State's office
 - Not registered
 - Secured proper documents to register
 - Legal Counsel suggests we register as a new Board



- Vendor Sponsorship
 1. Consulted with LASBO
 2. Emulated LASBO sponsorship process
 3. Discussed details with Legal Counsel
 4. Asked LASTO President to draft a “Who we are” letter
 5. Developed process and documents for LASTO specifics
 - a. Platinum Plus
 - b. Platinum
 - c. Gold
 - d. Silver
 - e. Friends of LASTO
 6. Asked members for Local Vendor List
 7. First distribution – late 2014
 8. Second distribution – early 2015
 9. SUCCESS