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Cornyn, Hutchison split votes on transportation bill



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Texas split its vote in the U.S. Senate today, with one voting for and one voting against the transportation bill passed about an hour ago.

Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison, R-Texas, voted for the measure, one of 21 GOP senators to join their Democratic colleagues. Four senators did not vote, but no Democrat voted against the bill.

Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas, voted against. Other members of the Republican leadership, including minority leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, voted no as well. A full roll call is available here.

Hutchison, in a press release, said she favored the two-year, \$109 billion bill in part because it included bus safety measures she has been pushing for years.

In a follow-up email, an aide said "the Motorcoach Enhanced Safety Act of 2011 will require the Department of Transportation to make much-needed upgrades to federal safety standards for motorcoaches, increase driver operating standards and training requirements, and implement important safety-enhancing technologies."

Specific provisions, according to the release, include:

- Safety belts and compartmentalized seating systems to ensure occupants have the capability to stay in their seats in a crash.
- Anti-ejection window glazing to prevent passengers from being ejected from the motorcoach in a crash.
- Strong, crush-resistant roofs that can withstand rollovers.
- Electronic stability control systems that will help prevent rollover accidents.
- Classroom and behind-the-wheel training for motorcoach operators. Currently, no such training is required by federal regulation.
- Improved oversight of the National Registry of Certified Medical Examiners that will set standards for driver physical fitness, and a medical certificate process to ensure that all certificates are valid and unqualified operators are rejected.
- Strengthened motorcoach vehicle safety inspections including roadside inspections, safety audits, and state and motor carrier programs for identifying vehicle defects.

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Transportation writer Michael Lindemberger, reporter Theodore Kim and editorial writer Rodger Jones cover the subject from tollways to traffic, roads to rail. They invite tips and feedback from decision-makers and commuters alike.

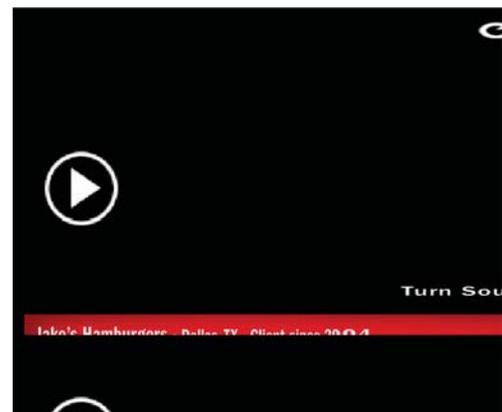


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