

Attorney: More regulations could have prevented Chattanooga bus crash

Jan 17, 2017 9:44 PM CST



Six children were killed in the bus crash on Nov. 21. (WSMV file photo)

NASHVILLE, TN (WSMV) -

Some are questioning state regulations after the release of a report on the deadly Chattanooga school bus crash that killed six children.

“This report is horrible. It's an indictment of the system of safety for our children. It's appalling,” said Nashville attorney David Raybin.

The preliminary report released by the National Transportation Safety Board on Tuesday is a tough reminder of that day back in November. Raybin said it also reinforces the need for big changes.

“These deficiencies have been known for years. There is nothing new about this until you have a tragedy,” Raybin said.

For many parents, the pain is still raw. “Don't take life for granted. Don't take your kids for granted, because tomorrow is never guaranteed,” said Misti Nash, who had two children on the bus that day.

In the report, the NTSB explains that the transportation of school children to and from home is exempt from many federal regulations.

“If we had the federal regulations in place, some of these children could potentially be alive today,” Raybin said.

Federal regulations apply mostly to commercial vehicles, and rarely apply to school buses. That means while truck drivers have to go through routine physicals and log hours to ensure they are not fatigued, school bus drivers do not.

According to Raybin, another difference is how the vehicle inspections are handled. He said commercial vehicles are looked at more thoroughly and more often.

“Locals say, well if you put the same regulations on us it's going to cost us a lot of money. And school buses only run for a couple of hours a day, they are not driving all over the country. We don't need to have the same thing. I am sorry. Our children are the most precious cargo you could ever have in a vehicle,” he said.

Raybin said unless Congress steps in to enforce minimum standards on school buses, this kind of tragedy will likely happen again.

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