

**Bill No. LXXXVI of 2006**

THE CHILDREN SCHOOL BAGS (LIMITATION ON WEIGHT)  
BILL, 2006

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BILL

*to provide for limitation on the weight of school bags, duties and responsibilities of the schools to ensure the compliance of the limitations so imposed and to provide lockers in schools and to issue necessary instructions for handling and carrying of school bags by children and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.*

BE it enacted by Parliament in the Fifty-seventh Year of the Republic of India as follows:—

1. (1) This Act may be called the Children School Bags (Limitation on Weight) Act, 2006. Short title and commencement.

5 (2) It shall come into force with immediate effect.

2. In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires,— Definitions.

(a) “appropriate Government” means in case of a State the Government of that State and in other cases, all the Central Government;

(b) “prescribed” means prescribed by rules made under this Act;

Weight of school bag not to be more than ten per cent of body weight.

**3.** (1) It shall be the duty of the appropriate Government to ensure that the weight of the school bag to be carried by a child of particular class shall not be more than ten per cent of the weight of the child:

Provided that there shall not be any school bag for a child studying in nursery and Kindergarten classes.

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(2) The appropriate Government, shall in consultation with the Indian Academy of Pediatrics or such other body as may be specified by the Central Government, notify in the Official Gazette, the average weight of the child for a particular class for determining the weight of the school bag.

Appropriate Government to ensure lockers in school.

**4.** (1) The appropriate Government shall, within its territorial jurisdiction, ensure that every school provides lockers of such size, as may be prescribed, to each student in the school up to class eighth in order to enable him to keep his sports equipments, books and note books in the school.

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(2) The appropriate Government shall issue necessary instructions to every school authority wherein every teacher shall have responsibility to inform the students upto class fifth in advance about the books and note books to be brought to school on a particular day.

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Schools to issue guidelines on school bags.

**5.** (1) The appropriate Government shall ensure that every school, within its jurisdiction, issues guidelines and instructions prescribing dimensions and the fabric for the school bag for students upto a particular class in such manner as may be prescribed.

(2) The appropriate Government shall direct every school within its jurisdiction to issue guidelines and ensure that:—

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(a) the students should use appropriate school bag with several compartments to balance the weight and broad padded straps for symmetrical distribution of weight on their spine;

(b) the students should always use both straps for carrying school bags and no student is slinging his bag over one shoulder;

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(c) the students should always keep the bag down while waiting for the school conveyance or in the school assembly;

(d) the students should bend at knees with back straight while lifting the school bag.

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(e) the students should be told how to pack their school bags so that heavy items should be close to the body and not carry unwanted items to school.

Penalty.

**6.** Any school violating the provisions of this Act and the rules made thereunder shall be liable for fine which may extend to three lakh rupees:

Provided that the appropriate Government may, if the school is recognized, derecognize the school in case of second or subsequent violation and rules made under this Act.

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Power to remove difficulties.

**7.** If any difficulty arises in giving effect to the provisions of this Act, the Central Government may, by order published in the Official gazette, make such provisions, not inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, as appear to it to be necessary or expedient for removing the difficulty:

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Provided that no such orders shall be made after the expiry of the period of three years from the date of commencement of this Act.

Overriding effect.

**8.** The provisions of this Act shall be in addition to, and not in derogation of, the provisions in any other law, for the time being in force, relating to school bags.

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Power to make rules.

**9.** The Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, make rules for carrying out the purposes of this Act.

## STATEMENT OF OBJECTS AND REASONS

Small children often have been seen tottering to school with heavy backpacks. The results of this excessive weight is more serious than ever expected. Some children may develop a permanent stoop due to the heavy pressure on their spinal cord, which would lead to permanent damage to their physical structure and back muscles.

It is a medically proven fact that lifting heavy burdens for a long time or distance is not good for anyone, especially children. In the tender age, bones are delicate and excessive weight can misalign the spine leading to offensive skeletal and muscle maturity. Carrying a heavy bag on the back often results in aches in the back and shoulders. Forward bending at the back makes the work of breathing harder. Children carrying bags weighing more than 10 per cent of their body weight have been found to have poorer lung function.

Yet, life goes on as before for most families even after they hear their children complaining about pain in back and neck. Growing weight of school bag and its effect on health of the children has become a matter of grave concern for every parent. School authorities have also been expressing their concern over the issue but nothing is being done to lessen the burden of school bags.

Along with books, children have to carry their sports and other equipment with them. If lockers are provided to children in school, it will allow them to leave sports equipment, and certain books and notebooks in school. Further, the school should issue common instructions to students in advance which books will be needed and which can be left at home and teaching the child to put down the bag when waiting at the bus stop, in the assembly, and to use both straps of the bag, etc. Some schools have adopted a way for reducing the weight of school bags. They don't send all the books back home. Only those books are kept in the bags which the students are required to study at home. This has been working very well for junior classes. Therefore, there is an urgent need to enact legislation for the whole of the country to save the children from carrying heavy loads on their back.

Hence this Bill.

VIJAY J. DARDA

#### MEMORANDUM REGARDING DELEGATED LEGISLATION

Clause 9 of the Bill empowers the Central Government to make rules for carrying out the purposes of the Bill. As the matter will relate to details only, the delegation of powers is of normal character.

## RAJYA SABHA

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*(Shri Vijay J. Darda, MP)*