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MAYOR EMANUEL ANNOUNCES NEW PARTNERSHIP WITH SECRETARY OF STATE TO STRENGTHEN ENFORCEMENT AGAINST ILLEGAL PARTY BUS OPERATORS

One year later, enforcement proves successful deterrent to crime on party buses

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and Secretary of State Jesse White today joined the Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP) and Chicago Police Department (CPD) to announce an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) with the Illinois Secretary of State (SOS) to increase the city's capacity to crack down on illegal party bus operators and protect Chicagoans and visitors. While Chicago's new rules have set clear standards for party bus operators in Chicago, the IGA will support the city's ability to enforce on operators registered outside the city, but traveling in Chicago.

"Party buses, like all of Chicago's vast entertainment options, must support public safety, not work against it," said Mayor Rahm Emanuel, "With a new partnership with the Secretary of State and continued enforcement, we will build on our efforts throughout the summer to keep residents and visitors safe."

The IGA aims to coordinate party bus enforcement across city and state agencies. The IGA will:

- Expand BACP access to SOS driver and vehicle databases: This agreement will provide increased access for additional BACP employees to look up vehicle plates, VIN numbers and driver's license numbers in real time – all critical information to conduct investigations.
- Establish BACP access to Driving Record Abstracts: To support real-time enforcement efforts, the BACP enforcement team will have expanded access to view driver abstracts, a three-year record of all moving violation convictions, accident involvement reports and other actions that result in license suspensions, revocations or other disqualifications. This will allow BACP investigators to determine if charter-sightseeing vehicle drivers have a valid Commercial Driver's License passenger endorsement, which is required to operate such a vehicle.
- Create a Party Bus Safety Task Force: The City and SOS will establish a Party Bus Safety Task Force, including CPD, BACP, SOS, OEMC, the Illinois Department of Transportation and Illinois State Police. This Task Force will share important information, data and best practices on enforcement to increase public safety throughout the State.

“I want to commend Mayor Emanuel for championing the party bus ordinance and Superintendent Johnson for cracking down on violators,” said Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White. “I’m pleased to work with the city of Chicago to improve the safety and security of party buses on our roads.”

One year after the city’s tougher party bus ordinance went into effect, CPD and BACP continue to enforce the new ordinance to help keep Chicagoans safe. Since the ordinance went into effect, police have made 11 illegal weapons and narcotics arrests under the new rules. At the same time, gun violence and drug crimes related to party buses have dropped throughout the city – making for a safer city and an improved consumer experience. In 2016, there were six shooting incidents on or associated with party buses while in 2017, the year the ordinance went into effect, the number dropped by half, to three. Through June 1, 2018, there has been one shooting incident associated with party buses.

“Everyone has a role to play to make Chicago safer and stronger,” said Chicago Police Superintendent Eddie Johnson. “Today’s agreement is the latest example of the collaboration and partnership between agencies to reduce violence in our city and create a culture of accountability for those who choose not to abide by society’s rules.”

This past weekend, CPD and BACP executed a joint mission aimed at curbing problem operators in the Wrigleyville area. On Friday night June 1, CPD officers in the 19th District worked with BACP enforcement to crack down on illegal party bus operators. This resulted in 32 citations and two cease and desist orders for being unlicensed, not registering properly with the City and not being in compliance with critical security protocols called for in the party bus ordinance.

“We are committed to expanding our partnership with City and State agencies to ensure party bus businesses traveling into Chicago are safe,” said BACP Commissioner Rosa Escareno. “Over the past year, BACP and Police enforcement efforts have made great strides to enhance the safety of our residents and visitors. These new partnerships will embolden our safety efforts to ensure party bus operators traveling into the city meet our safety standards. If they don’t, we will now have the resources to find them and stop them.”

Since June 1, 2017, when the city implemented the new rules under an ordinance championed by Mayor Emanuel, regulators have issued the following enforcement:

- 260 total tickets issued (125 in 2017, 135 in 2018) to 37 different companies
- 36 total cease and desist orders (including two over the weekend)
- \$130,650 in fines levied since June 2017 (latest fines from weekend enforcement not yet levied)

In March 2017, Mayor Emanuel introduced the party bus ordinance to crack down on illegal party buses that operate in the city and increase safety requirements for licensed bus operators. The strengthened rules improve safety by requiring party bus licensees to provide each passenger with a summary of acts prohibited on buses, which include unlawful possession of a firearm or controlled substance, security guard if alcohol is present or if the vehicle makes multiple stops. Additionally, the new ordinance requires clearly identifiable signage on licensed large

charter/sightseeing vehicles to ensure any buses operating without a license are easy to identify and shut down.

Consumers who want to verify whether a party bus is lawful can visit the “Public Passenger Vehicle License” database on the City of Chicago data portal at <https://data.cityofchicago.org>. If the vehicle is not listed on the city’s portal, residents may request verification from the charter bus company. For more information about public vehicle licensing, residents can be directed to BACPPV@cityofchicago.org.

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