



**Jesse White**  
SECRETARY OF STATE

**NEWS**

ILLINOIS SECRETARY OF STATE

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**Indianapolis School Bus Fatality Prompts  
Warning From Secretary White**

**SPRINGFIELD** — The death of a 16-year-old Indianapolis boy has prompted Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White to issue a school bus safety warning to all Illinois students.

Raul Gonzalez, an Indianapolis student, was killed recently when he stuck his head out the window of his school bus and struck a tree. News accounts said the driver swerved to avoid an animal in the road and in doing so drove close to the tree.

"In our visits to schools throughout Illinois we get invaluable feedback from transportation officials, administrators and teachers," Secretary White said.

"There has been a growing problem in Illinois with kids sticking heads, hands and arms out the windows of their moving school bus. The tragic accident in Indianapolis serves as a very unfortunate example that serious and potentially fatal accidents happen from this sort of behavior."

White, who as secretary of state serves as Illinois' primary voice for vehicular safety, asked school administrators to remind students of the danger of hanging out the bus window.

"Young people think they are immortal," White said. "They live in the denial that accidents like this one won't happen to them. I'm certain that none of the students at Perry Meridian High School in Indianapolis ever thought they'd lose a classmate to an accident that was so tragic and yet easy to avoid.

"Kids need to remember to stay in their seats and talk in a reasonable tone of voice so that their driver can keep them safe."

The school bus interior, Secretary White said, is painted with a stripe that

warns students not to open windows below that line. That warning is designed to prevent accidents such as the one that occurred in Indianapolis.