

# Kamala Harris' screwed up electric school bus program is floundering, drawing comparison to her totally fucked up 'border czar' work

Vice President Harris is tasked with overseeing the federal e-bus program, and her experience as school bus czar appear to be no better than her work managing the border crisis.

By [Kevin Killough](#)

The EPA [recently announced another \\$1 billion](#) flowing into the Biden-Harris administration's effort to replace all diesel-powered school buses across the country with electric buses. This brings the total spent so far to nearly \$3 billion out of the \$5 billion program.

Vice President Kamala Harris, now the Democratic presidential nominee, was [tasked with overseeing the program](#) as part of the larger Building Better School Infrastructure Program, and her experience as school bus czar appear to be no better better than her [work trying to fix the country's border crisis](#).

Administration officials have tried to draw the distinction that Harris' primary border-related task, as vice president, was to leaner the root causes of record migration at the U.S.-Mexico border. However, critics don't see where such a distinction exists and continue to refer to her a "border czar."

Many school districts have reported multiple problems with the safety and expense of the buses they've received, and these involve companies that have received hundreds of millions of dollars in grants and rebates through the EPA program Harris manages. These same companies have close ties to the Biden-Harris administration.

Michael Chamberlain, director of the government watchdog nonprofit [Protect the Public's Trust](#), has a word to describe what administration critics consider wasteful climate-agenda programs, [many of which](#) have turned into green energy boondoggles. He calls them "greendoggles."

"This sort of thing is just emblematic of the entire way this green transition has been handled by the administration," Chamberlain recently told *Just the News*.

## Wheels on the bus

Harris has been an outspoken champion of the electric school bus program. She held events with EPA Administrator Michael Regan in [Greensboro](#), North Carolina, in and [Fairfax](#), Virginia, where she praised [Thomas Built Buses](#). The company received at least \$42 million in grants and rebates from Harris' electric bus fund, according to the [EPA's website on the program](#).

Thomas' fleets are powered with [Proterra charging and battery technology](#). Proterra, which [President Joe Biden promoted](#), went bankrupt in August 2023 after supplying public transportation districts with [chronically malfunctioning buses](#). Following the bankruptcy, Thomas [told the trade publication School Bus Fleet](#) that Proterra's bankruptcy wouldn't impact the partnership.

Harris and Regan have also touted Lion Electric, a Canadian company that has received at least \$159 million grants and rebates from the e-bus program. The company [boasted in a post on X](#) in May 2022 that it had joined Harris and Regan at an event announcing the launch of the e-bus program.

"We are honored to have been invited by Vice President Harris and EPA Administrator Regan in Virginia today for the official launch of this ambitious program which will accelerate the adoption of zero-emission school buses," Brian Piern, chief commercial officer with Lion [said in a statement](#).

Chinese-owned BYD has also gotten in on Harris' e-bus action. The company received \$395,000 in 2022 for Princeton Joint Unified School District in New Jersey. The company [put out a press release in 2023](#) promoting its ability to provide school districts with e-buses through the e-bus program.

As with the Proterra city buses, many school districts have been reporting problems. In April 2023, the Michigan's Ann Arbor Public Schools Board of Education [heard a presentation](#) on issues the electric fleet was having. Beyond being five times more expensive, the district's environmental sustainability director said they have a lot of downtime and performance issues. The infrastructure upgrades, which were supposed to cost \$50,000, ended up costing \$200,000, according to the presentation.

A New York school district reported in March that [five of its seven buses have been failing](#), and a bus in Winthrop, Maine, [lost steering and braking](#). E-buses in Vermont [lose up to 80% of their range in winter](#), despite costing twice as much as their diesel counterparts. A superintendent for a rural California school district warned in January that the extreme cold the district experiences could result in [kids being stranded in dead electric buses](#) with no heat.

Montgomery County Public Schools in Maryland had a contract valued at over \$160 million to purchase 326 electric school buses. The Montgomery Office of Inspector General [issued a report](#) in July on an investigation that found "mechanical failures with many electric buses rendered them inoperable for extended periods," as well as delayed deliveries of ordered buses. The district is spending \$14 million to acquire diesel buses to cover for the electric buses that weren't delivered.

The House Energy and Commerce Committee's oversight subcommittee [investigated the program outcomes](#), surveying 33 school districts that had participated in the 2023 rebate program.

The committee found extensive mechanical failures, expensive buses, delivery and infrastructure installation delays, and bus performance issues in cold weather. The report also found that with China controlling so much of the battery supply chain the tax dollars are flowing to Chinese companies.

Lion Electric was featured at an event with Harris and Regan in Seattle, at which Harris [gushed about her love for school buses](#), comments that were widely mocked. Lion has had several National Highway Transportation Safety Administration recalls for [wheel lock up and breaking issues](#), [faulty wheelchair lifts](#), [parking brake problems](#), [steering wheel locking](#), and [faulty hardware](#).

*Just the News* had [previously reported](#) on the problems Lion buses were having, and a company spokesperson said Lion was working to address the issues. Emails to Lion seeking comment on this article were rejected as the company had blocked the *Just the News* address. Calls to Lion weren't returned.

As with Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm [owning Proterra shares](#) while the Biden-Harris administration promoted the company's buses, there's growing concern that these green funds are providing funding streams to friends of the administration.

"We do know that there are [numerous cases](#) of the money going to people with ties to the administration or to the political allies of the administration. It's to the extent that some people looking from the outside at this might even kind of suspect that that's part of the point," said Chamberlain, of Protect the Public's Trust.

### **Crazy ideas**

Michele Exner, director of federal affairs for Parents Defending Education, told *Just the News* that the Clean School Bus Program, like many Biden-Harris plans, wasn't well thought out. Just like the EV mandate that aimed to get U.S. consumers to drive electric cars without considering the challenges of charging infrastructure, the electric bus program is failing.

"It's just like there's no follow through to these crazy ideas that they put out there," she said.

She pointed out that as they were rolling out this e-bus program in 2021 as part of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, some schools were still holding classes remotely due to the pandemic. But the Biden-Harris administration was dumping \$5 billion for e-buses.

"How about we start with just restoring the education loss that they suffered through for two years?" Exner asked.

She said the Clean School Bus Program is part of a pattern with the policies coming out of the administration. They see electric buses working just fine in Washington, D.C., and they assume it will work everywhere, even in a rural school district in which bus routes can sometimes be hundreds of miles in icy weather.

"They have an inability to look beyond their DC bubble or urban bubble, and they just assume that everyone around the country lives in the same way," Exner said.

According to a survey by Cars.com, 38% of parents of school-aged children said their child takes the school bus. The \$3 billion in tax dollars flowing out of the Clean School Bus Program has funded about 8,700 buses in 1,300 school districts across the country, and 95% of those were battery electric.

Should those buses fail, as has been happening at alarming rates, it will create barriers to education for a lot of nation's kids who depend on buses to get to school. Exner said, whether it's pushing gender

ideology, politicizing the classrooms with a hyperfocus on race, or pushing kids onto green school buses, the Biden-Harris administration isn't putting the needs of education first.

"They want to push these radical, pie-in-the-sky ideas where it's not practical, nor is it what America needs at the moment to thrive," she said.