



**House Criminal Justice Committee
Written Proponent Testimony – HB 83
Ohio School Boards Association
Buckeye Association of School Administrators
Ohio Association of School Business Officials
May 13, 2020**

Chairman Lang, Vice Chair Plummer, Ranking Member Leland, and members of the House Criminal Justice Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to present written testimony today in support of Substitute House Bill (HB) 83. On behalf of the members of our three associations, this testimony is submitted by Will Schwartz with the Ohio School Boards Association (OSBA), Kevin Miller from the Buckeye Association of School Administrators and Barbara Shaner representing the Ohio Association of School Business Officials.

Our organizations represent public school district boards of education, superintendents, treasurers/CFOs, business managers, and other school business officials from around the state. Our members appreciate Representative Brown and now Senator Schaffer introducing this legislation that will have a positive impact on student safety in and around school busses.

The number of vehicles illegally passing stopped school buses is a growing concern for all districts. OSBA organized a bus passing survey for districts to record and report their incidents for one day in March 2019. The results from the 183 districts that returned the survey were staggering. Nearly one third of the 15,000 school bus drivers completed the survey and recorded over 1,500 buses were illegally passed. If all drivers experience this rate of being illegally passed – Ohio could have 4,500 buses illegally passed each day. The following factors were revealed from the survey:

- 45% of the illegal passing occurred in the morning
- 52% were illegally passed in the afternoon
- 73% were passed as approaching the bus from the front
- 27% were passed from the rear
- 98% were passed on the left
- 2% were passed on the right

Sub. HB 83 adds images, or videos captured from camera's installed on a school bus for use as evidence when vehicle operators violate school bus safety laws. The images or videos can be used to corroborate a bus driver's account of a violation and may be used by law enforcement to identify the violator. It also appropriates much-needed resources to provide \$1 million in grants to districts to purchase and install cameras. Other important provisions include providing a mechanism to educate Ohioans on how to safely pass buses and strengthening penalties for offenders.

School bus drivers are committed to keeping students safe and thus are therefore occupied with monitoring where their students are, as well as watching traffic in and around the bus. The tools provided by HB 83 will be a great help in ensuring safety for our children on our school buses.

Our organizations would also urge this committee to make two modifications to the legislation. First, the bill must add a provision to HB 83 that would repeal the change made last year in HB 166 that removed the requirement that motor vehicles display a front license plate. This, too, would aid in attempts to identify bus safety violators and efforts to enforce the law by law enforcement agencies.

Second, the bill must require a civil penalty be assessed, instead of a warning under current law, to a vehicle's owner if the identification of the driver cannot be established.

Chairman Lang and members of the House Criminal Justice Committee, thank you for your time and attention. We urge your support for HB 83. Please contact us with any questions you may have.