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September 27,2019

To Senator McColley and the Senate Transportation, Commerce and Workforce Committee--thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 134.

Over the years the amount of school children who have been affected by people who run the red lights on school buses at pick up and drop off locations have increased. The media and other national organizations have brought the issue to the public's attention. To no avail, the problem still exists and continues to be on the rise. March 20,2019, 186 Ohio school districts participated in Red Light Violation survey put out by the Ohio School Boards Association (OSBA). On that day, Bus Driver's reported 1,521 cars going through the red lights on the school bus. Of those, 31 cars where on the right hand side of the bus. That is only a small number of schools. The state has over 600 school districts. The problem has a very negative effect on our school children and their families.

The lives and well being of our most valuable citizens in our community as they commute to and from school is important! Senate Bill 134 ensures that our citizens, who for a variety of reasons don't stop for the school bus red lights receive stiffer penalties. This hopefully will have drivers thinking twice before they pass or go around a stopped school bus loading and unloading Ohio's school children. We all have seen the news footage of the cars going around the school bus with the stop lights on. Everytime a car goes around or passes a stopped bus with its red lights on, that could be a child's life. Our community entrust their most precious loved one in the care of their school districts transportation department everyday. It's our duty to ensure that we get there children to and from home in a safe manner. In fact, Ohio Revised Code 3301-83-13 School bus routes and stops speaks to the process of entering and exiting a school bus. Our Bus Drivers are trained and expected to follow this procedure to ensure student safety. The community sharing the roadways with school buses have a responsibility to adhere to the laws of the roadway and school bus stop lights. Nothing is more upsetting than having to call a parent with news that their child has been hurt while in your care, and more so that there was a fatal accident.

The proposal of SB 134 is the rigorous education and enforcement needed to protect our children. A few municipalities do a public service announcements (PSA) at the start of the school year, but this is hardly enough. This bill would provide a statewide initiative to remind drivers of the laws and penalties for not adhering to the law. Educating the public through a PSA on the laws of school bus safety is a vital part of

the bill. Bringing awareness to distracted driving and when to stop for the school bus is paramount in the safe transportation of our children. This is a proactive stance to helping the public understand their responsibility to safe driving practices. Overall as a state, this could help lower the amount of those who violate the red stop lights on a school bus. Which inturn would reduce the risk factor to school bus stop related instances.

SB 134 also gives the ability to use the camera footage from the outside of the bus as evidence for our law enforcement. The technology of this footage has come along way and can provide a clear video of the person driving the vehicle as well as the license plate number. Law enforcement would have the evidence needed to enforce the law for school bus reds violation and/or any other infraction as a result of this careless act.

This bill has real consequences to breaking the law and a continuation to increase penalties if one continues on to do so. SB 134 is not only addressing school bus red light violators, but also vehicular homicide as a result of running the stop lights. This is where the real risk comes into play. The current penitiles and possibility of hurting a child or worse yet a loss of a precious life doesn't seem to be a big enough deterrent. Maybe SB 134 will be enough of a wake up call to drivers to follow the law and stay attentive while on the road.

In closing, I feel Senate Bill 134 is long overdue. Our children deserve the very best we can give them. As a transportation professional this bill supports our bus drivers and the safety of our children. As a parent it educates the community to help keep everyone safe. I want to thank Senator Gavarone for taking the time to research and putting together a well throughout proposal. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on behalf of Senate Bill 134, and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have. Please feel free to reach me on my cell phone at 440-622-1680.

Thank you,



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