



Pickerington School District

Certified Director of Pupil Transportation

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**Senate Transportation, Commerce, and Workforce Committee  
Sub. Senate Bill 134 Proponent Testimony  
Ohio School Boards Association  
Buckeye Association of School Administrators  
Ohio Association of School Business Officials  
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Chairman McColley, Ranking Member Antonio, and member of the Senate Transportation, Commerce, and Workforce Committee; I am here today to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 134, the School Bus Safety Act. My name is Greg Kelley with the Pickerington Local School District.

As someone who has worked in pupil transportation since 2002, and been actively working on the problem of illegal passing of school buses since 2013, I am encouraged by the effort of Senator Gavarone to advance our ability to gather the required information listed in ORC 4511.751;

*“The operator shall report the license plate number and a general description of the vehicle and of the operator of the vehicle.”*

Bus Drivers main focus at the drop-off and pickup location is on the children and procedure is specifically provided by 3301-83-13 (b) (6):

*“Each pupil shall be assigned a designated place of safety on the residence side of the roadway on which the vehicle is scheduled to stop. Driver must account for each pupil at designated place of safety before leaving. Pupils are not to proceed to their residence until the school bus has departed.”*

This procedure is reversed for pickup as each driver is required to count the number of students at the stop and then count each student again as they board to make sure everyone is accounted for.

This understandably limits a bus driver’s ability to gather the required information listed in 4511.751. Initially transportation staff were required to complete a form provided to us by law enforcement. In 2013 my department completed a count in a 15 school day period of 88 illegal passing events. Less than 20% could provide the complete information required to hold the motorist accountable.

Later that year the Law Director for the City of Lancaster implemented the Stop Arm Enforcement Program that involved civil code requiring only a license plate to be provided. The reason being the difficulty with prosecution due to meeting the sufficiently clear image, the number of violations, and to

increase our success rate in holding motorists accountable. We identified several of our buses that experienced the highest violations whose route were mainly in the jurisdiction of the city. We then had them equipped with “stop arm cameras”. The first year of existence enabled us to hold accountable 140 motorists who put children in danger. We also equipped other buses who traveled outside the jurisdiction for video capture but experienced the inability to get a good view of the operator. Other factors were adverse conditions such as low light, heavy rainfall, etc. That being said they were very useful in documenting the number of events, location, time of day, general vehicle description, and plate numbers. In addition a driver only had to focus on the description of the driver as the camera would capture the other legal information required.

In Pickerington we currently have been submitting video evidence to corroborate the illegal passing events to the State Highway Patrol on a limited scale. They have shared that video evidence to verify such violations helps expedite the process. I’m sure it is much like our discipline officer being able to validate misbehavior on a school bus via video, a picture proves more valuable than words can say.

Our bus company has just completed installation of “DriveCam” on our fleet that will store up to 100 hours of video.

I am in favor the SB 134 in highlighting and more clearly defining the role of stop arm video capture, and providing districts financial support in the effort to keep our children safe. I have spoken with other transportation professionals and they are also encouraged by the added enforcement provisions and clarity for motorists who strike a student.

I am appreciative of the opportunity to speak on this issue and willing to answer any questions you may have.