

St. Marys City Schools



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House Criminal Justice Committee Written Proponent Testimony – HB83 May 19, 2020

Chairman Lang, Vice Chair Plummer, Ranking Member Leland, and members of the House Criminal Justice Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony to you today in support of Substitute House Bill (HB) 83. My name is Dan Grothause and I am the Transportation Supervisor with the St. Marys City School district in Auglaize County.

The St. Marys City School District appreciates Representatives Brown and Schaffer for introducing this legislation that will have a positive impact on student safety in and around school buses.

The number of vehicles passing stopped school buses is alarming. In March of 2019 we along with 182 other districts participated in the OSBA school bus passing survey which recorded over 1,500 violations in a single day, calculated out for a normal school year that adds up to over 270,000 violations per year. This figure does not indicate how many students were in danger during these violations, but if it was only one student then the cost is too high.

Our drivers in St. Marys and throughout the state take student safety very seriously. They go to great lengths to educate the students on proper safety procedures while entering and exiting the bus. We are monitoring traffic, using high visibility reflective tape on the buses, have upgraded the red warning lights to strobe lights and use white strobe light on top of bus, all in an attempt to bring attention to fact that a school bus is present and stopped to load or unload students.

While doing all of this we are still required to get license plate number and a general driver description when we believe a motorist has violated 4511.75(A) Stopping for stopped school bus. Attempting to get license plate number is now even more difficult with the removal of front license plates as required in HB 166.

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That is why the use of cameras to capture this information can greatly increase the likelihood of a citation being issued to violators.

Currently we are permitted to install cameras on the outside of the bus to help identify the operator and capture license plate number. Sub HB 83 would now allow these images as corroborating evidence in a court proceeding.

I ask for your support of Sub. HB 83 and also ask that you considering modifying the language to repeal the change last year in HB 166 that removed front license plates.

Chairman Lang, Vice Chair Plummer, Ranking Member Leland, and members of the House Criminal Justice Committee, thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Dan Grothause
Transportation Supervisor
St. Marys City Schools