



# Ohio Prosecuting Attorneys Association

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Senate Bill 134  
Written Proponent Testimony  
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Chair McColley, Vice-Chair Hoagland, Ranking Member Antonio and members of the Senate Transportation, Commerce, and Workforce Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer written proponent testimony on Senate Bill 134.

Ohio prosecutors support Senate Bill 134 as an appropriate response to a growing problem of drivers failing to stop for school buses. As was noted in sponsor testimony, between 2015 and 2017, nearly 4,200 drivers in Ohio were ticketed for illegally passing a bus. That is an unacceptable statistic. That's 4,200 times, *at a minimum*, that the lives of a schoolchild or of schoolchildren were placed at risk by reckless behavior. If we don't do a better job of deterring and punishing this behavior it will inevitably result in tragedy.

Senate Bill 134 will help deter and punish illegally passing a stopped school bus in four important ways. First, the bill designates the month of August as "School Bus Safety Awareness Month" to help raise awareness and educate the public about school bus safety and the need to properly stop. Second, the bill enhances the penalty for reckless aggravated vehicular homicide and aggravated vehicular assault by one degree when the death or serious physical harm occurs as the result of illegally passing a stopped school bus. Additionally, the bill creates the offense of 'vehicular harm' for when the act of illegally passing a stopped school bus results in harm that does not rise to the level of 'serious physical harm,' a legal term that has a very specific meaning. Someone who causes 'harm' while illegally passing a stopped school bus should be subjected to more than a traffic ticket. This new offense recognizes that. Third, the bill provides for increased fines and license suspensions for individuals who are repeatedly caught passing stopped school buses. And finally, the bill creates a grant program for school bus cameras that will aid law enforcement in catching violators.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide written remarks. Senate Bill 134 is a good bill that will help protect some of the most vulnerable members of our society. We appreciate the bill sponsor's efforts and for working with us throughout the drafting process. We encourage your favorable consideration of this bill.