



Connecticut School Transportation Association

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Statement by
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Before the
Judiciary Committee
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**H. B. No. 5272 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING
EVIDENCE OF FAILURE TO STOP FOR A SCHOOL BUS**

Sen. McDonald, Representative Lawlor, Honorable Members of the Judiciary
Committee:

My name is William D. Moore. I am the Executive Director of the Connecticut School Transportation Association – COSTA. COSTA is a trade association comprised of owners and operators of school buses, student transportation vehicles and other associate members. Our membership of more than 125 companies and Boards of Education includes nearly all of the providers of student transportation in Connecticut. Our industry safely operates more than 10,000 school buses and student transportation vehicles (STVs) that safely transport nearly 500,000 children to and from school safely every day.

I am appearing before you today regarding Raised H.B. No. 5272, *An Act Concerning Evidence of Failure to Stop for a School Bus*. COSTA supports this measure and respectfully requests that the Judiciary Committee report it out favorably. This measure provides that a still or video image of a vehicle passing a stopped school bus may constitute sufficient proof of the registration number of such vehicle so as to allow the owner thereof to be deemed the operator and charged with a violation.

The industry takes school bus safety very seriously. The safe transportation of children to and from school and to and from school activities is the most important priority for our members. Student transportation providers are well aware that the passengers that they are carrying are more valuable than anything else that anyone can transport.

As hard as it may seem, every day, drivers fail to stop for school buses. At every stop that every school bus makes, every child is at risk. Why do drivers fail to see a twelve foot high

eight foot wide yellow object with red flashing lights and a stop semaphore extended? The unfortunate truth is because they are distracted by other things going on in their lives – talking on telephones, eating, listening to the radio, shaving, thinking about the events of the up-coming or just-ended day – there are hundreds of reasons why drivers fail to stop for school buses.

Failure to stop for a stopped school bus that has its red flashing Stop on Signal (SOS) lights on carries a significant fine - \$470. In addition, the Commissioner of the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) may order the offender to undergo driver re-training.

Passing a stopped school bus is a serious violation, and there is only one exemption. A police officer can direct traffic around a stopped school bus; however, at that point, the officer takes personal responsibility for any accident that may occur as a result of that action. Even emergency vehicles with lights flashing and sirens wailing must stop for a stopped school bus.

How frequently do cars pass stopped school buses? In 2009, there were 1,008 reported violations and 1,008 warnings issued according to the DMV. How are the violations reported? School bus drivers are trained to watch the children as they cross in front of and board or depart the bus. Among the many requirements of the “loading/unloading” procedure, drivers also watch for cars that pass the stopped bus. Drivers read the license plates and study the type of vehicle and immediately fill out a passing violation report that is turned in to the DMV when they return to the bus yard. Not all of the violations are reported because sometimes the driver cannot see the license plate or because the driver has difficulty reading the license plate in the mirror as the passing vehicle drives away.

This measure will allow photographic or digital images that clearly show the registration, color and type of vehicle to serve as proof of the vehicle’s registration. This will aid in enforcement and reporting the violations to the DMV. Ultimately, this will serve as a significant deterrent to passing a stopped school bus.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to appear before you.

I will be happy to answer any questions that you might have.