



State of Connecticut
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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Testimony:
March 3, 2010
Judiciary Committee Hearing
Agenda #7
H.B. 5272

Statement of John W. Hetherington, State Representative, 125th District

I respectfully urge that statutory revisions be made to facilitate successful prosecution and deterrence under C.G.S. Sec. 14-279 which deals with passing a stopped school bus that is displaying flashing red signals.

In in some towns, including New Canaan, a violation may be photographed by a camera mounted on a school bus. Given the advance of this technology there should be modification of Sec. 14-279 (c) requiring a written report from a school bus operator to document a violation. It may not be practical for an operator who is supervising children to record information about a passing vehicle. I would suggest that, as an alternative, an authenticating document from the custodian of the photographic record be expressly accepted as sufficient to establish the vehicle registration and for the purpose of raising a rebuttable presumption that the owner was the driver at the time of the violation.

Failure to obey Sec. 14-279 is extremely serious in terms of the danger it poses for children. Further, the conspicuous appearance of a stopped bus with warning lights leaves little room for excuse. To increase deterrence, it is recommended that the offense be raised to a misdemeanor. This would require a court appearance and impress upon a violator the gravity of the matter.

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