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## OLR Bill Analysis

### sSB 430 (as amended by Senate "A")\*

#### ***AN ACT CONCERNING THE OPERATION OF EMERGENCY VEHICLES.***

##### **SUMMARY:**

By law, all vehicles, including emergency vehicles, must stop for a school bus displaying flashing red signal lights on a highway or private road, in a parking area, or on school property. The operator must stop at least 10 feet from the front when approaching and 10 feet from the rear when overtaking or following the bus, except at a traffic officer's direction.

This bill allows an emergency vehicle operator, after stopping, to proceed past the school bus as long as he or she does not endanger life or property in doing so. By law, the vehicle must be using an audible signal, such as a siren, and flashing or revolving lights, as it must for other motor vehicle law exemptions (see BACKGROUND).

By law, violators are subject to a \$450 fine for a first offense and, for a subsequent offense, a fine of between \$500 and \$1,000, imprisonment for up to 30 days, or both (CGS § 14-279(b)).

\*Senate Amendment "A" replaces the substitute bill, which allowed the emergency vehicle operator to pass a school bus after slowing down or stopping to the extent necessary for the safe operation of the emergency vehicle.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2014

#### **BACKGROUND**

##### ***Emergency Vehicle***

The law defines an "emergency vehicle" as:

1. an ambulance or vehicle operated by a member of an

emergency medical service organization responding to an emergency call,

2. a fire department vehicle on its way to a fire or emergency call (but not while returning from the fire or call),
3. a state or local police vehicle operated by a police officer or motor vehicle inspector answering an emergency call or pursuing fleeing law violators, or
4. Department of Correction vehicle operated by a correction officer responding to an emergency call in the course of his or employment (CGS § 14-283(a)).

### ***Emergency Vehicle Operation***

By law, emergency vehicle operators may:

1. park or stand the vehicle notwithstanding other laws;
2. proceed past a red light or stop signal or stop sign after slowing down or stopping to the extent necessary for the safe operation of the vehicle;
3. exceed posted speed limits as long as they do not endanger life or property; and
4. disregard statutes, ordinances, or regulations governing direction of movement or turning in specific directions.

The exemptions apply when the emergency vehicle is using an audible warning signal device, such as a siren, whistle, or bell, and visible flashing or revolving lights that meet standards specified in law.

### ***Legislative History***

The Senate referred the bill (File 122) to the Judiciary Committee, which replaced the original bill with this substitute. The original bill reiterated that an emergency vehicle was required to stop for school buses displaying flashing red signal lights.

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Public Safety and Security Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 25 Nay 0 (03/13/2014)

Judiciary Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 39 Nay 0 (04/14/2014)