

ACT Testimony_HB0761_School Bus Monitoring Cameras

Uploaded by: Amy Frieder

Position: FAV



Montgomery County's Advocates for Better Transportation

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February 13, 2024

SUPPORT for Montgomery County - School Bus Monitoring Cameras - Distribution of Fines
MC 6-24 (HB 0761)

Action Committee for Transit, a Montgomery County–based organization, supports improvements to pedestrian safety, especially for our most vulnerable road users, including persons with disabilities, the elderly, and children. Making roads safer for our most vulnerable users makes them safer for everyone.

In 2016, Montgomery County began a school bus monitoring camera program¹ to respond to the increasing roadway dangers faced by children traveling to school. The program, which has equipped all 1,600+ Montgomery County Public School (MCPS) buses with cameras, issues citations and fines to drivers that could injure or kill schoolchildren in the zone surrounding a stopped school bus.² In FY 2022, 59,151 citations were issued, resulting in \$14,787,750 in fines.³

Current law permits Montgomery County to use the fines collected from the program, after administrative costs, to make safety improvements.⁴ While school bus cameras are proving successful in reducing violations on county roads, the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) determined that specific locations on state roads maintained by the State Highway Administration (SHA) make up the largest and most persistent sources of

¹ Cameras record vehicles that pass stopped school buses that have activated red flashing lights and stop sign/arm extended. Following a review process, confirmed violators are issued a \$250 fine by mail within 14 days of the event. [Montgomery County FY2022 School Bus Monitoring System and Stop Safety Review](#), Dec. 30, 2022.

² When approaching a stopped school bus with activated flashing red lights, Maryland law requires that motorists traveling in the same direction as the bus must stop and remain stopped until the stop sign and lights are deactivated. The law also requires that motorists approaching the bus from the opposite direction must stop if there is no physical barrier, such as a grass or raised concrete median. Maryland Code, Transportation § 21-706.

³ [Montgomery County FY2022 School Bus Monitoring System and Stop Safety Review](#), pp. 8-10.

⁴ Maryland Code, Courts and Judicial Proceedings § 7-302(e)(4).

violations. However, MCDOT does not control state roads and cannot address these areas of highest safety risk to its schoolchildren.

Montgomery County - School Bus Monitoring Cameras - Distribution of Fines MC 6-24 would correct this omission by requiring the fines collected by Montgomery County school bus monitoring cameras on SHA-administered state roads be used only for pedestrian safety improvements where the violations occur. SHA-administered roads include most of Montgomery County's multi-lane arterials, which are designed to prioritize vehicle throughput and typically feature only the barest protections for pedestrians. Education and enforcement have minimal impact on driver behavior on arterial roads.⁵ Instead, these roads require context-specific modifications such as curb realignments, median installations, and adding traffic signals to reduce dangerous behavior.⁶

Montgomery County state roads are among the most dangerous in the state.⁷ Children traveling to and from school buses on state roads are only a few feet from serious injury or death. We now have the data and funding to improve safety at the most dangerous school bus stops in Montgomery County, the next step is for funding to be allocated to SHA.

We strongly urge you to vote yes on *Montgomery County - School Bus Monitoring Cameras - Distribution of Fines MC 6-24* (HB 0761) to ensure these critical safety improvements are made.

Sincerely,
Anna Priddy
On behalf of the Action Committee for Transit

⁵ Steve Davis, "How street design shapes the epidemic of preventable pedestrian fatalities," Smart Growth America (Jul. 12, 2022), <https://smartgrowthamerica.org/how-street-design-shapes-the-epidemic-of-preventable-pedestrian-fatalities/>.

⁶ See generally Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) [SHA Context Driven Initiative](#) (2020). While the initiative does not specifically discuss school bus stops, it generally highlights "safety, land use, environmental issues, culture, and community livability as critical factors in the planning, design, construction, and operation of transportation infrastructure."

⁷ In 2023, Montgomery County had the third-highest number of roadway fatalities in Maryland (only Prince George's and Baltimore Counties had higher roadway fatalities). During this time, 43 people died, 15 of them pedestrians. State roads had more than twice the number of fatalities than county roads. <https://zerodeathsmd.gov/resources/crashdata/crashdashboard/>.

HB761 Moon FAV - Montgomery County Fine Data.pdf

Uploaded by: Delegate David Moon

Position: FAV

Background for automated enforcement

The State of Maryland enacted enabling legislation in 2011 that permits local jurisdictions to implement school bus safety camera programs.

A joint pilot between the Montgomery County Police Department (MCPD) and the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) began in January 2014 with 25 cameras placed on the outside of school buses; the cameras were strategically deployed throughout the County. The cameras have the ability to record vehicles that pass stopped school buses that have activated flashing red lights. Violations captured by these cameras are reviewed by the police department's Automated Traffic Enforcement Unit and citations are mailed to the registered owner of the vehicle.

In October 2016, MCPD and MCPS embarked on an Automated School Bus Stop Arm Enforcement Program. After the enactment of State and Local legislation, the program went "live" on October 13, 2016, with a total 81 buses installed with cameras. By November of 2016, the number of camera-equipped buses increased to 103. By March of 2017, the number of buses with cameras increased to over 200 and it remained at that number for the duration of the 2016-2017 school year. For the duration of the 2017-2018 school year, 500 buses were equipped with enforcement cameras. By the 2019-2020 school year, all MCPS school buses were equipped. The decrease between FY22 and FY23 was due to decommissioning older buses in the fleet.

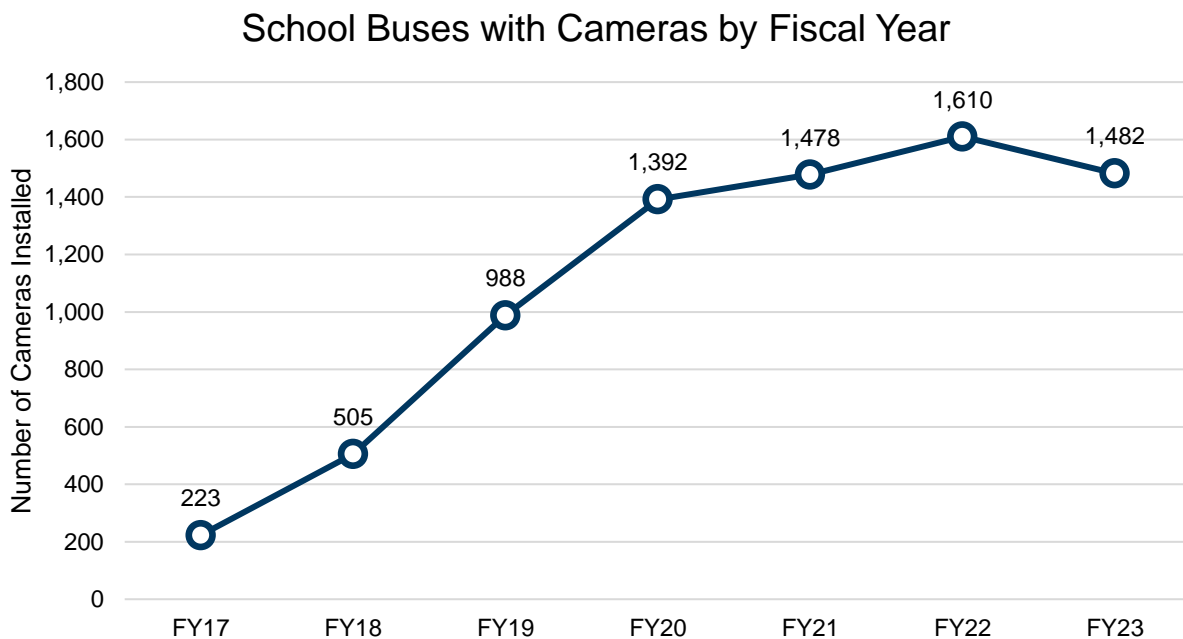


Figure 3 - Number of school buses equipped with cameras by fiscal year.

Citations issued

Citations by fiscal year

In FY23, the school bus monitoring program issued 52,066 citations, resulting in \$13 million in fines. Of these citations, 72% (37,739) were for drivers passing in the opposite direction, while 28% (14,327) were for those traveling in the same direction as the stopped bus. Citations decreased 13% in FY23, with an 18% decrease in same-direction citations and a 10% decrease in opposite-direction citations. Preliminary FY24 data show a continued downward trend in citations, aligning with the County's experience with other automated enforcement programs.

	FY18	FY19	FY20*	FY21*	FY22	FY23
Citations mailed	34,201	54,837	50,698	7,058	59,614	52,066
Citations per active camera	68	56	36	5	37	35
Citations from opposite direction	20,720	34,415	31,573	4,827	42,127	37,739
Citations from same direction	12,928	20,413	19,125	2,231	17,487	14,327
Citations with direction not captured	553	9	0	0	0	0
Total fines	\$8,549,750	\$13,708,125	\$12,674,500	\$1,764,500	\$14,903,500	\$13,016,500

*School closures during COVID-19 pandemic resulted in fewer bus trips.

FY23 top 10 citation locations

For FY23, the following ten blocks had the highest number of recorded violations. Eight of the top 10 blocks were along multi-lane State roads with the remaining two belonging to the County. These ten blocks accounted for 22% of all citations issued. See the Appendix for a detailed analysis of each bus stop and any safety recommendations.

Block	Roadway Owner	Violations Same Direction	Violations from Opposite Direction	Total Violations
5100 RIVER RD, 20816	State	156	1,888	2,044
8800 COLESVILLE RD, 20910	State	259	1,738	1,997
1400 EAST WEST HWY, 20910	State	217	1,406	1,623
800 UNIVERSITY BLVD E, 20903	State	69	1,074	1,143
5200 RIVER RD, 20816	State	103	992	1,095
400 N FREDERICK AVE, 20877	State	50	907	957
900 CLOPPER RD, 20878	State	190	691	881
7100 ARLINGTON RD, 20814	County	38	686	724
7900 GEORGIA AVE, 20910	State	39	577	616
2300 BEL PRE RD, 20906	County	20	491	511

To see data on citations issued under the school bus monitoring program for all school bus stops, use the link below or visit the Montgomery County Vision Zero website. The reporting unit for school bus stops is the block level.

Link: https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/visionzero/Resources/Files/FY17-23_Bus_Camera_Tickets_by_Stop_and_Fiscal_Year_PUBLISHED.csv

NOTE ON BLOCK ADDRESSES: When the school bus monitoring system captures a violation, the bus’s latitude and longitude are captured. The latitude and longitude are then matched to the nearest address. When the bus stop is near an intersection, the matched address may be along the intersecting road. Therefore, some of the block information presented in the block summary may reflect a violation that occurred on an intersecting road.

Citations issued

For fiscal year 2022 (FY22), 59,151 citations were issued under the school bus monitoring program resulting in \$14.8 million in fines. Based on the direction of the passing vehicle, 41,799 (71%) of drivers passed in the opposite direction and 17,352 (29%) were traveling the same direction as the stopped bus.

FY22 represented the most citations issued since the program began in 2016. The increase in violations from the prior two years was the result of all Montgomery County School buses having monitoring systems installed during the 2019-2020 school year and a restart of school bus and commuting patterns coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on the low level of repeat offenders for the school bus monitoring program and experience from the red-light and speed automated enforcement program, the County expects the number of citations issued to decrease over the next five years.

	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20*	FY21*	FY22
Citations	16,388	34,033	54,492	50,106	6,910	59,151
<i>Citations per active camera</i>	73.5	67.4	55.2	36.0	4.7	36.7
<i>Citations from opposite direction</i>	0	20,626	34,184	31,217	4,741	41,799
<i>Citations from same direction</i>	0	12,858	20,299	18,889	2,169	17,352
<i>Citations with direction not captured</i>	16,388	549	9	0	0	0
Total fines	\$2,048,500	\$8,508,250	\$13,621,875	\$12,526,500	\$1,727,500	\$14,787,750

*School closures during COVID-19 pandemic resulting in fewer bus trips.

For FY22, the following blocks had the highest number of recorded violations. Eight of the top 10 blocks were along multi-lane State roads with the remaining two belonging to the County. These ten blocks accounted for 18% of all citations issued.

Comparing FY22 top violation blocks to the blocks under review by MCDOT, seven out of the ten blocks were the same. Three stops in the FY22 top ten were not in the prior top ten:

- 800 block of University Blvd E
- 7100 block of Arlington Rd
- 5400 block of Tuckerman Ln

Block	Roadway Owner	Violations Same Direction	Violations from Opposite Direction	Total Violations
5100 River Rd	State	185	1,798	1,983
8800 Colesville Rd	State	203	1,388	1,591
1400 East West Hwy	State	299	1,195	1,494
800 University Blvd E	State	138	1,022	1,160
400 N Frederick Ave	State	85	894	979
7100 Arlington Rd	County	48	798	846
5400 Tuckerman Ln	County	50	642	692
1000 Clopper Rd	State	129	553	682
8900 Piney Branch Rd	State	145	399	544
8800 Piney Branch Rd	State	99	418	517

To see data on citations issued under the school bus monitoring program for all school bus stops, use the link below or visit the Montgomery County Vision Zero website. The reporting unit for school bus stops is the block level.

Link: https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/visionzero/Resources/Files/FY17-22_Bus_Camera_Tickets_by_Stop_and_Fiscal_Year_PUBLISHED.csv

NOTE ON BLOCK ADDRESSES: When the school bus monitoring system captures a violation, the bus's latitude and longitude are captured. The latitude and longitude are then matched to the nearest address. When the bus stop is near an intersection, the matched address may be along the intersecting road. Therefore, some of the block information presented in the block summary may reflect a violation that occurred on an intersecting road.

HB0761 - SHA - Montgomery County - School Bus Moni

Uploaded by: Patricia Westervelt

Position: INFO



Wes Moore
Governor
Aruna Miller
Lieutenant Governor
Paul J. Wiedefeld
Secretary

February 29, 2024

The Honorable Marc Korman
Chair, House Environment and Transportation Committee
251 House Office Building
Annapolis MD 21401

RE: Letter of Information – House Bill 761 – Montgomery County – School Bus Monitoring Cameras – Distribution of Fines MC 6-24

Dear Chair Korman and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) offers the following information on House Bill 761 for the Committee's consideration.

House Bill 761 requires that any balance remaining from the fines collected by Montgomery County for violations enforced by school bus monitoring cameras on State highways, after repayment of the costs of implementing and administering the school bus monitoring cameras, be remitted to the Comptroller for distribution to the State Highway Administration (SHA). The balance of the fines shall be used only to enhance pedestrian safety at locations in Montgomery County where the violations occurred.

The SHA was pleased to learn the Montgomery County delegation adopted an amendment that would allow the fines from violations enforced by school bus monitoring cameras on State highways to be pooled and used county-wide to enhance safety at locations where students: 1) board or exit a school bus; or 2) subject to a certain condition, travel to or from a destination where they board or exit a school bus. By pooling the funds for any of the locations where violations occurred, SHA believes more meaningful safety enhancements can be implemented to help Montgomery County students.

The SHA thanks the delegation for its efforts to make Montgomery County a safer place and for working with the Administration to improve upon the provisions in the bill. We look forward to our continued partnership with the Montgomery County delegation to reach Vision Zero in Maryland.

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee consider this information during its deliberations of House Bill 761.

Sincerely,

Matthew Mickler
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Maryland State Highway Administration
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Pilar Helm
Director
Office of Government Affairs
Maryland Department of Transportation
410-865-1090