

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
1999 Session

FISCAL NOTE

Senate Bill 40 (Chairman, Judicial Proceedings Committee)  
(Departmental - Transportation)

Judicial Proceedings

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**Motor Vehicles - School Buses - Loading and Unloading of Passengers**

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This departmental bill provides that a school vehicle driver may not receive or discharge passengers at any off-roadway location other than an approved loading zone. The bill stipulates that an approved loading zone be intended exclusively for passengers residing on the same side of the roadway as the loading zone. A school vehicle may not activate the vehicle's alternately flashing signals when receiving or discharging passengers at a loading zone bus stop. The bill also clarifies certain requirements governing the operation of school vehicles and situations whereby motorists do not have to stop for a school vehicle with alternately flashing signals (divided highways).

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** None.

**Local Effect:** None. Complying with the bill's requirement would not affect local school expenditures.

**Small Business Effect:** The Maryland Department of Transportation has determined that this bill has minimal or no impact on small business (attached). Legislative Services concurs with this assessment.

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## Fiscal Analysis

**Additional Comments:** Currently, school vehicle drivers either receive or discharge students on the roadway with the vehicle's red flashing lights activated, whereby motorists must stop; or at an off-roadway loading zone without the vehicle's red flashing lights activated, whereby motorists do not have to stop. Currently, some off-roadway loading zones are designed in a manner in which students must cross a roadway unprotected by a school vehicle's red flashing lights. According to the Maryland PTA, 2 children have died in recent years while attempting to cross a roadway without the school vehicle's red flashing lights being activated.

This bill would require all off-roadway loading zones be designed exclusively for students residing on the same side of the roadway as the loading zone. Accordingly, students will not have to cross the roadway without the protection of the school vehicle's red flashing lights. This restriction only applies to school vehicles in an off-roadway loading zone. Students may still be required to cross a highway or roadway in cases where the school vehicle is receiving or discharging students on the roadway. In such cases, the school vehicle's red flashing lights would be activated and motorists will be required to stop.

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**Information Source(s):** Maryland Department of Transportation, Maryland Association of Boards of Education, Maryland PTA

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - January 25, 1999

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