

**Department of Legislative Services**

Maryland General Assembly

2004 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**

House Bill 97 (Chairman, Environmental Matters Committee and Delegate Wood)  
(By Request – Departmental – State Police)

Environmental Matters

Judicial Proceedings

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**Department of State Police - School Bus Safety Enforcement Fund - Reporting Date**

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This departmental bill changes the date by which the Secretary of State Police must report to the Governor and the General Assembly regarding the status of the School Bus Safety Enforcement Fund from March 1 to September 1 of each year.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** None.

**Local Effect:** None.

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

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**Analysis**

**Current Law:** Chapter 332 of 2000 created a special nonlapsing fund to provide grants to local law enforcement agencies to address the problem of drivers failing to stop for school buses. The law provides \$600,000 annually to the School Bus Safety Enforcement Fund from the Uninsured Motorists Fund, including \$50,000 to offset the yearly costs of administering the school bus fund. March 1 of every year, the Secretary of State Police must report to the Governor and the General Assembly on the fund's

status, including grants that have been awarded, the costs of administering the fund, and the effect of the fund in reducing illegal passing of school vehicles.

**Background:** Due to inconsistencies in funding, DSP chose to operate this program based on the State fiscal year, which also allowed recipients time to prepare to use the grant in conjunction with the school year. Grant awards are effective on July 1 of a given year; therefore, DSP advises that it can provide a complete report on the program's status and effectiveness in September rather than March.

Since the fund was created four years ago, the number of citations issued to drivers for passing a stopped school bus climbed from 966 to 2,073. Over 75% of these citations are attributed to enforcement activity supported by the program. The School Bus Grant Selection Committee awarded grants to 54 law enforcement agencies in all 23 Maryland counties for fiscal 2004.

**Additional Comments:** DLS notes that DSP already issues the annual report on the fund on a fiscal year basis.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Department of State Police; *School Bus Safety Enforcement Fund Annual Report, July 1, 2002 – June 30, 2003*; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - January 16, 2004  
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