

**Board of County
Commissioners**

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Carroll County Government

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March 28, 2023

The Honorable William C. Smith, Chair
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: HB849 – School Bus Stops – Violations – Enforcement and Safety Measures – OPPOSE

Dear Chair Smith and Members of the Committee,


The Carroll County Board of Commissioners write in opposition to HB849. Current Maryland law prohibits a vehicle from passing a school bus on an undivided highway and establishes fines for the offense. This bill would require a law enforcement agency to issue a warning, rather than a fine, for the first violation if the offense was captured on a school bus monitoring camera. We believe that this change in state policy is unwarranted and may compromise the safety of school children.


The camera program has been operating successfully in Carroll County since 2020 and the number of citations issued has increased year over year, suggesting that the chances of an incident involving a child are increasing. It is important to note that each potential violation captured by a camera is reviewed for accuracy, with approximately 75% of those being pursued as true violations. However, with a recidivism rate of less than 3%, we see that fines have a demonstrable effect in decreasing repeat offenses. The policy of issuing citations and fines for each offense should remain unchanged. Warnings have little effect in moderating behavior compared to monetary fines. An education effort conducted by the state would be a more effective tool, using such venues as driver's education curriculums, literature made available at MVA locations and in MVA correspondence regarding driver's license/registration renewals, EZPass, titling documents, etc. The last thing the state should be doing is signaling a reduction in the seriousness of these types of infractions.

For these reasons, we respectfully request an unfavorable report for HB849.

Sincerely,

THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF CARROLL COUNTY


Edward C. Rothstein (COL, Ret.)
President


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