

Chairman Smith and Members of the Maryland Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee:

I am writing to request your opposition to HB0849. If enacted, this legislation would threaten student safety, jeopardize pedestrian safety, and endanger students across the State of Maryland.

Efforts should be focused on improving motorist education by addressing driver training programs and MVA testing procedures. We should not be weakening our laws to accommodate ignorance of them.

Whenever a motorist chooses to illegally pass a stopped school bus, a child's life is put at risk. School bus stop arm camera safety enforcement is a critical tool in Carroll County for changing reckless, aggressive, and distracted driving behavior around school buses. **Please do not weaken this crucial Maryland traffic safety law.**

HB0849 would grant drivers a free pass for endangering students during the most vulnerable moments of their travel to and from school. It would weaken student traffic safety programs and inject confusion into the application of the law. We are on a path of improved student safety in Carroll County and this legislation would reverse our progress.

As a longtime resident and parent of three students that have graduated from Carroll County Schools, I have personally experienced the frustration of watching drivers pass by school buses as I held my children back on the sidewalk. Please do not make this law more confusing and hand out warnings for violations. Drivers ought to be accountable for the great responsibility that comes along with operating a vehicle and their driver's license is a commitment to abide by traffic laws. When they get it wrong, there should be a consequence, not a pass. The lesson of a fine may be painful, but not nearly so painful as injuries to pedestrians or the loss of a young life.

In Carroll County, we have 4 lane roads in communities with speed limits of 25mph. At least one of these communities has hundreds of students riding the school buses. Passage of HB0849 will send the message that it is OK to pass a bus in this community and that is the wrong message to send to motorists, students, and community members.

I respectfully ask that you oppose HB0849 and demonstrate that the safety of our children is more important than the desires of people who seek to break our laws.

Sincerely,

Anita Stubenrauch