



**Board of Education of Howard County
Testimony Submitted to the Maryland Senate,
Judicial Proceedings Committee
March 29, 2023**

**Board of Education
of Howard County**

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**HB0849: UNFAVORABLE
School Bus Stops - Violations - Enforcement and Safety Measures**

The Board of Education of Howard County (the Board) opposes **HB0849 School Bus Stops - Violations - Enforcement and Safety Measures** due to its potential to lead to unsafe driver practices around school bus stops.

Under existing law that authorizes civil penalties when law enforcement issues traffic citations for violations caught on school bus cameras, HB0849 prohibits a law enforcement agency from issuing a citation to a driver if the violation occurred on a road that has four or more lanes of traffic and the vehicle was traveling in the opposite direction of the school bus. This only applies for a first violation, for subsequent violations the agency may issue a warning or a citation.

Under Transportation Article § 21-706 when a school bus stops and operates its flashing red lights, the driver of any other vehicle meeting or overtaking the school vehicle shall stop at least 20 feet from the front of the school vehicle, if approaching the school vehicle from its front. This does not apply in the case of a divided highway.

While law enforcement agencies currently have the discretion to issue a warning in place of a citation for any traffic violations caught on school bus cameras, HB0849 would increase the number of warnings, making drivers more apt to disregard school buses stopping for students. Moreover, the fact that HB0849 calls out one specific instance where warnings are required may give drivers the impression passing school buses on a four-lane road is allowable.

For these reasons, we urge a UNFAVORABLE report of HB0849 from this Committee.