

EDUCATION ADVOCACY COALITION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

HOUSE BILL 530: TASK FORCE ON PROACTIVE REVIEW OF AUDIO AND VIDEO RECORDINGS ON SPECIAL EDUCATION BUSES

February 18, 2026

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Education Advocacy Coalition for Students with Disabilities (EAC) is a coalition of nearly 50 organizations and individuals committed to advancing education policies that protect and support Maryland students with disabilities. The EAC supports House Bill 530 because it acknowledges the vulnerability of many students with disabilities on unsupervised school buses. The EAC supports consideration of this measure to investigate ways to create a safer environment for children with disabilities.

House Bill 530 would establish a Task Force to explore how artificial intelligence (AI) can be used to proactively review audio and video recordings from special education buses to help protect student passengers.

The abuse of children with disabilities on school buses is an issue we continue to see in Maryland and across the country. In 2025, Howard County police charged a school bus aide with assault and a fourth-degree sexual offense after reviewing footage that showed the aide assaulted two nonverbal students with disabilities. Law enforcement had initially been aware of only one potential victim; the second was identified during the video review.

In another Maryland case, a Montgomery County bus driver was charged with second-degree rape, sexual abuse of a minor, and a third-degree sexual offense after footage revealed the abuse of a 12-year-old student with disabilities. The driver had been transporting students with disabilities since 2006.

Proactively reviewing audio and video recordings, rather than relying entirely on parent concerns and reports, would serve as a meaningful deterrent to abuse. When drivers, attendants, and all adults on a school bus know that footage may be systematically reviewed rather than only accessed after an incident is reported, the likelihood of misconduct decreases.

For children with disabilities, particularly those who are nonverbal or minimally verbal, the need for deterrence cannot be overstated. These students are often targeted precisely because it can be challenging for them to describe an unsafe encounter, articulate fear or distress, or report inappropriate physical contact.

Proactive review also enables earlier intervention, reducing the duration and severity of harm. Implementing a system that facilitates timely identification of concerning behavior would allow schools to intervene promptly, preventing additional trauma and protecting students who depend entirely on adults for their safety and well-being.

Ultimately, proactive review is not simply about catching misconduct; it is about creating a culture of safety. When staff understand that their interactions may be routinely assessed, they are more likely to adhere to best practices, seek support when faced with behavioral challenges, and respond appropriately to student needs.

For these reasons, the Education Advocacy Coalition supports House Bill 530 while acknowledging that the Task Force must consider the significant concerns for student confidentiality and the guardrails and security that will be necessary around the use of these AI tools.

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Respectfully submitted,

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