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**TO:** House Ways and Means Committee

**BILL:** House Bill 530 – Task Force on Proactive Review of Audio and Video Recordings on Special Education Buses

**DATE:** February 18, 2026

**POSITION:** Oppose

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**Explanation:**

The Maryland State Board of Education (State Board) and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) respectfully oppose **House Bill (HB) 530 – Task Force on Proactive Review of Audio and Video Recordings on Special Education Buses**. This legislation would require MSDE to establish a Task Force regarding the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on Special Education School Buses to proactively review audio and video recordings to ensure the safety and security of student passengers.

Each local board of education has authority under COMAR 13A.06.07.03 to oversee the safe operation of its student transportation system, including the purchase, installation, and use of internal audio and video recording devices.

The use of these recording devices has been beneficial to local education agencies (LEAs) to observe and investigate concerns that may arise on school buses across the state. These recordings are typically the property of the LEA and are subject to the data privacy and security standards, as they involve the recordings of both adults and children of the LEA.

While MSDE shares the commitment to improving student safety, we have significant concerns regarding the practical implementation of this task force. Requiring video recordings on all special education buses would likely lead to their consideration as “educational records” under FERPA. This subjects the recordings to strict protections concerning access and disclosure. Continuous audio and video recording, coupled with AI analysis, raises questions about who will access this data, how it will be stored, and what protections will prevent misuse or unauthorized disclosure.

The use of AI with recordings and images of children is a largely untested field that has not been thoroughly explored by AI experts with experience in Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) or the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) laws. AI systems are still evolving and lack standardized validation for school transportation environments. Misinterpretation of nonverbal cues or atypical communication may lead to unwarranted disciplinary action or overlook genuine issues.

Additionally, the administrative and technical demands of providing staff to the Task Force without additional resources risk overextending staff capacity and delaying other critical obligations.

To ensure the successful understanding of AI-driven monitoring solutions, MSDE will need to engage and contract with a vendor that has proven expertise in artificial intelligence applications for transportation video and audio monitoring.

Implementing this bill's initiative on July 1, 2026, to deliver recommendations by December 1, 2026, would require significant financial resources for additional staff capacity and contracted AI expert services, which the Department does not possess internally. This area of expertise would be essential for the successful implementation of the Task Force and its goals. This financial impact must be evaluated to ensure sustainability and alignment with the current priorities within the agency.

The State Board and the Department respectfully request that you consider this information as you deliberate **HB 530**. For further details, please contact Laurel Cratsley, Interim Executive Director of Government Affairs, at [laurel.cratsley@maryland.gov](mailto:laurel.cratsley@maryland.gov).