

RESOLUTION 222-15

**RESOLUTION SUPPORTING SENATE BILL S503 WHICH SEEKS TO
IMPLEMENT SCHOOL BUS STOP ARM CAMERAS**

WHEREAS, the implementation of Senate Bill S-503 would assist law enforcement with catching drivers who pass school buses illegally, and

WHEREAS, according to a one-day survey of 102,000 school buses, 78,518 drivers passed when the stop arms were out and red lights were flashing; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Clayton that the Borough supports the adoption of s-503, which would assist law enforcement with catching drivers who pass school buses illegally, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we urge our State Senator and our representatives in the General Assembly to join as co-sponsors of S-503; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this Resolution be forwarded to the Honorable Governor Chris Christie, our District Representatives and the New Jersey State League of Municipalities.

ADOPTED at a regular council meeting, which was held on December 10, 2015.

BOROUGH OF CLAYTON



THOMAS BIANCO, Mayor

ATTEST:



CHRISTINE NEWCOMB, Clerk



R-222-15

[Address]

Re: Support S503—School bus stop arm camera bill

Dear Assemblyman XXX,

We write to urge passage of S503 to assist law enforcement with catching drivers who pass school buses illegally. Consider a child waiting at the bus stop before school. As the bus brakes and comes to a stop across the street, the driver switches from flashing amber lights to flashing reds and extends the stop arm. The child begins to cross the street, trusting drivers will heed the red sign and lights. How many drivers pass buses stopped like this every day? More than you think.

According to a one-day survey of 102,000 school buses taken by the National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services, 78,518 drivers passed when stop arms were out and reds were flashing. **That means during the course of a 180-day school year, an estimated 14 million drivers illegally pass stopped school buses in the U.S.** In New Jersey, police officers issued more than 1,600 violation notices to drivers who failed to stop for a school bus last year (*Star Ledger*, South Jersey Editorial Board). That number represents 1,600 times New Jersey drivers said the law didn't apply to them, and they were willing to risk a child's safety to shave off a few seconds of drive time. But the reality is that number is significantly higher because these violations represent only those reported by school bus drivers or seen by police officers. This alarming driving behavior has to stop, and there is current legislation in New Jersey's General Assembly which can help law enforcement efforts.

Bi-partisan legislation (S503) has been introduced by State Senators James W. Holzapfel (R-Ocean) and Jim Whelan (D-Atlantic) which would permit school districts and local law enforcement to deploy cameras on school bus stop arms, capture video of drivers illegally passing a school bus, and authorize local law enforcement to issue citations to the driver. The cameras would automatically detect and record a potential violation, which would allow school bus drivers to focus on kids rather than trying to scribble down the license plate numbers of lawbreakers. Bus drivers would send the video evidence to local law enforcement for review. The police officer or sheriff would then decide whether or not to issue a citation. This system would hold drivers accountable and reinforce the law that drivers need to stop when reds are flashing and the sign is out.

By passing this bill, New Jersey would join 13 other states that already permit the use of stop arm safety cameras to assist law enforcement. We were shocked and deeply disturbed by comments made by some legislators suggesting this bill is not about safety. In the most recent survey by the Kansas State Department of Education, **60% of pedestrians killed in school bus loading and unloading accidents were struck by other passing vehicles (2013-2014 National School Bus Loading and Unloading Survey, Kansas State Department of Education).** We urge you to pass S503 and help keep kids safe when getting on and off the school bus.

Sincerely,

PLEASE SUPPORT S503: School Bus Cameras
Sponsors: Senator James Holzapfel (R) and Senator James Whelan (D)

There are 23,000 buses on the road every day in New Jersey. Law enforcement issued more than 4,900 violations to drivers who illegally passed a school bus from 2012-2014 according to the Administrative Office of the Courts. That number is likely underreported, because those violations were only issued if a school bus driver, police officer, or parent had a chance to record the license plate number of the violator to provide to the local police. Nationally, there are .75 violations per bus, per day.

S503 establishes a five-year pilot program to allow school districts to decide whether they would like to install school bus monitoring systems to school buses' stop arms to capture video evidence of violations and hold drivers accountable for passing a school bus while children are getting on and off.

Questions & Answers

What is the goal of the legislation? To improve student safety while loading and unloading a school bus. Photo enforcement will ensure stop arm violations do not go unnoticed and lawbreakers are held accountable. The technology also gives school district transportation staff to conduct analysis of bus stops with spikes of violations.

How much does it cost? The program is violator funded, meaning there is no capital or operating costs for the state, school district or law enforcement. A vendor provides the equipment and installation at no cost to the school district and charges a monthly fee to cover equipment and continuing operation costs for the program.

How much is the fine for passing a loading/unloading bus? The monetary penalty is currently not less than \$100 for the first offense or up to 15 days in jail or 15 days community service for a first offense. For subsequent violations, the penalty is raised to \$250 or more and up to 15 days in jail. Five points are added to a driver's record for each offense. This bill would increase the fine to not less than \$300 or more than \$500. Under the bill, the fine revenue can only be used for municipal and school district purposes.

How does it work? When a violation is captured, then it is sent to local law enforcement or agent of the county who view the violation and use their discretion to determine if violation is warranted. If approved by officer, a violation is then sent to the violator, who can pay the violation or contest it in local court.

Organizations who support this legislation: New Jersey Education Association, New Jersey School Boards Association, New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association, Garden State Coalition of Schools, New Jersey League of Municipalities, and New Jersey School Administrators Association



IT'S ILLEGAL TO PASS SCHOOL BUSES



Most of the pedestrians killed in school bus-related incidents are between **5 and 7 years old**. Children are most vulnerable when they are getting on and off the school bus.

78,518 

drivers pass school buses on any given day in the U.S.

1,483  

Illegal passes occur on the right side of the bus, where children get on and off



Passing vehicles accounted for 60% of child fatalities in loading and unloading accidents

DECREASE IN VIOLATIONS AFTER CAMERAS INSTALLED



decrease in stop arm violations after the first year of cameras in Marietta, GA