

BILL: House Bill 263
TITLE: School Bus Monitoring Cameras - Exclusion of Vehicle Rental Companies - Repeal
DATE: February 9, 2017
POSITION: SUPPORT
COMMITTEE: Environment and Transportation Committee
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The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE), representing all of the state's local boards of education, supports House Bill 263.

MABE supports House Bill 263 in order to repeal the exclusion of rental car companies as owners of motor vehicles for the purpose of the enforcement of violations of overtaking and passing school buses loading and unloading students. MABE supports this bill in order to advance the abilities of school systems and local law enforcement agencies to protect the health and welfare of Maryland's most precious resource, our students. MABE represents 24 local boards of education with a unified commitment to ensuring student safety in all school-related activities, and especially school bus safety.

In 2011, MABE strongly supported enacting a new law to authorize a law enforcement agency, in consultation with a local board of education, to place school bus monitoring cameras on local school buses. This law has empowered local law enforcement agencies to issue warnings or citations not to exceed \$250 to vehicle owners or drivers for failing to stop for a school vehicle that has stopped with its alternately flashing red lights operating in accordance with the Maryland Vehicle Law. However, as the fiscal note states, the Judiciary advises that the current prepaid amount for school bus monitoring camera violations is \$125. As every driver should know, buses stopped for these purposes employ alternately flashing lights, and extending stop signs, and yet the numbers of drivers failing to stop in response to these obvious warnings are alarming.

In the 2017 legislative session, MABE is supporting other legislation, such as Senate Bill 154 and House Bill 495 to establish a minimum fine of \$250, and House Bill 186 to establish a fine for repeat offenders of this critically important public safety statute. MABE firmly believes that these bills will contribute significantly to heightening public awareness and improving driver behavior relating to the critical safety risks ever-present when school buses are engaged in loading and unloading students.

For these reasons, MABE requests a favorable report on House Bill 263.