

**BILL:** House Bill 849  
**TITLE:** School Bus Stops - Violations - Enforcement and Safety Measures  
**DATE:** March 29, 2023  
**POSITION:** OPPOSE  
**COMMITTEE:** Judicial Proceedings  
**CONTACT:** John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) opposes House Bill 849.

MABE opposes House Bill 849 because it would dramatically reduce the critically important enforcement of violations by drivers passing school buses loading and unloading students, when the violation is recorded by a school bus monitoring camera. Local school systems firmly believe that drivers on multi-lane roads without a median should continue to be held responsible for stopping and waiting for buses to load and unload.

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. 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 consistently alarming. The legislature has chosen to increase the fine from \$250 to \$500 to strengthen the law to further enhance student safety.

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. MABE opposes this bill as weakening the enforcement tools available to local law enforcement agencies to respond to unsafe driving. MABE supports preserving the current scope of student safety protections and enforcement responses to dangerous driving behaviors in the vicinity of school buses. House Bill 849 would detract from the abilities of school systems and local law enforcement agencies to protect the health and welfare of Maryland's most precious resource, our students.

For these reasons, MABE urges an unfavorable report on House Bill 849.