



SMOKY VALLEY

WE CHAMPION FOR ALL STUDENTS

PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT 400

USD 400 OFFICE
126 S MAIN
LINDSBORG, KS 67456

785.227.2981
785.227.2982 FAX

GLEN J. SUPPES
SUPERINTENDENT

ALISSA MAUK
BOARD CLERK

JULIE MARTIN
TREASURER

Testimony before the
House Judiciary Committee

**Authorizing the Department of Education to contract with a private vendor to
install and operate school bus cameras (HB2154)**

Presented by Glen J. Suppes
Superintendent of Smoky Valley Public Schools, USD #400
Member: Kansas School Superintendent Association (KSSA) and
United School Administrators

February 10, 2021

Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee, I want to thank you for the opportunity to provide our perspective with written testimony as a proponent of HB2154. I am Glen Suppes, Superintendent of Smoky Valley Public Schools. I also serve on the Board of Directors of the United School Administrators (USA) and I'm a member of the Kansas School Superintendents' Association (KSSA).

Our small district has experienced a number of motorists illegally passing one of our school buses, even when the lights are flashing and stop arms are extended. By now you have probably seen the number of incidents that have been reported on a single day on Kansas bus routes. As we all know, our number one job in the schools is to keep our children safe. In an effort to reduce the dangers of passing stopped school buses, we believe that enforcement of House Bill 2154 will assist in deterring the number of incidents we experience each year.

What I appreciate about HB2154 is that 1) implementation remains a local decision of the school board, and 2) there is no cost to the district to implement the program. Follow up and enforcement also do not fall into the hands of the local school administrators, yet student safety is at the heart of this effort.

School bus drivers are in no position to take their eyes off the children and their driving to attempt to read and document vehicle tag numbers. Without a program that captures license plate photos, we would be placing our employees in an uncomfortable position and questioning whether they accurately documented the tag numbers and described the vehicle correctly, if we expect them to make a report. Local visual reports can also lead to disagreements with community members, thus questions of accuracy may arise.

Electronic recording data places the responsibility directly on the violator and leaves the bus drivers out of the equation. But the bottom line, once again, is student safety. We believe that by supporting HB2154 our bus loading and unloading practices will become a much safer zone for our children, especially after drivers begin to understand that driving violations around a stopped school bus are an extremely serious matter.

Thank you for your consideration.