

Written Statement for the Judiciary Committee
To
HB 2154 Authorizing the Department of Education to contract with a private vendor to
Install and operate school bus cameras.

Presented to the House Judiciary Committee
Wednesday, February 10, 2021
3:30 P.M. Room 582-N
By Traci Becker, USD 349 Stafford Schools Superintendent

Chairman Patton, Member of the Judiciary Committee

I appreciate being able to present a written statement to the committee to encourage support on HB 2154. School district superintendents and school staff make the safety of the children in Kansas a top priority every, single day. It is a concern that there continues to be a significant risk that children in Kansas experience as they load and unload from stopped school buses.

Although, Stafford is a rural school district, it has, on occasion, experienced unsafe interactions with drivers who disregard school bus stops and the safety of loading and unloading students. This behavior continues due to minimal traffic and limited witnesses. Additionally, parents have opted to not utilize school transportation for this reason. Enhancing student safety in Kansas by reducing the frequency of school bus stop arm violations includes swift and effective enforcement. This enforcement should not be limited to the current law which requires positive identification of the driver.

I would like to reemphasize what Jim Karleskint, (United School Administrators of Kansas) has attested. Stop arm cameras by themselves are not effective without a supporting process that results in violations for those who break the law. House Bill 2154 would accomplish this by providing flexibility for the Kansas State Department of Education and School Districts to enforce stop arm violations using cameras along with a civil penalty process with no cost to the district. The process requires a positive identification of the registered owner of the vehicle and verification of the violator. This bill would provide the capability to process a large number of violations and provide for vigorous compliance with the law and improve the safety of students riding Kansas school buses.

We believe this bill is a positive step in protecting children as they load and unload from a stopped school bus. We would appreciate your support of HB 2154.

Respectfully,

Traci A. Becker
Superintendent
USD 349 Stafford Schools