



Spring Hill

SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Chairman Patton, Member of the Judiciary Committee

Thank you for allowing us to share our thoughts on the HB 2154 Authorizing the Department of Education to contract with a private vendor to install and operate school bus cameras. Spring Hill USD 230 is a small, rapidly growing district with a student population of a little over 3,400 students. We are located in southern Johnson and northern Miami Counties. With our incredible rapid growth, we've had to add buses and increase the number of bus routes for our students. There is a significant risk that children in Kansas experience each day as they load and unload from stopped school buses.

Unfortunately, I've witnessed cars going around our buses while stopped when we were either loading and/or unloading our students. We've had to make calls to law enforcement to report these issues. We have been fortunate and not had a fatality in Spring Hill USD 230. However, we are aware a seven-year old student was struck and killed east of Abilene by a young driver who did not stop for the school bus. It is our sincerest hope that Spring Hill USD 230 does not ever experience anything similar to this.

The Kansas State Department of Education has conducted one-day surveys in Kansas since 2013. Spring Hill USD 230, in association with AppleBus, have been willing participants in these surveys. These surveys track the number of vehicles that do not follow the laws regarding school bus stop arms while loading and unloading children. Our drivers have shared in the survey data multiple concerns with drivers going around the bus stop arms. While we have contacted law enforcement when we can identify the car and driver, we cannot always do this. Enforcement of the law requires positive identification of the driver and our bus drivers (who are rightly concentrating on our student riders) are not always able to provide the information needed.

House Bill 2154 would provide 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 submitted,

Dr. Wayne Burke
Superintendent
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Board of Education

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