



Oral Proponent Testimony before 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 Jim Karleskint, United School Administrators of Kansas

Chairman Patton, Member of the Judiciary Committee

I appreciate the opportunity to speak with the committee today. The United School Administrators of Kansas are very concerned for the safety of the children in Kansas. There is a significant risk that children in Kansas experience each day as they load and unload from stopped school buses.

43.4% of the 30 plus fatalities reported in the United States the past 5 years while school buses were loading, and unloading are the result of motorists violating school bus stop-arm laws. Kansas was fortunate and had not contributed to these statistics until September 9, 2020, when a seven-year old girl was struck and killed east of Abilene by a young driver who did not stop for the stopped school bus.

The Kansas State Department of Education has conducted one-day surveys in Kansas since 2013. These surveys track the number of vehicles that do not follow the laws regarding school bus stop arms while loading and unloading children. In the past 2 years the surveys have found that over 1000 vehicles each year violate the laws regarding school bus stop arms. 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.

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.

Currently there are 7 states that use this type of enforcement for violators of stopped school bus arms laws. 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,

Jim Karleskint
United School Administrators of Kansas