

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 3440**

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

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PRESENTED BY:

***William M. Straus***

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*To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:*

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act concerning the safety of school children embarking and disembarking school buses.

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PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>William M. Straus</i>	<i>10th Bristol</i>	<i>1/12/2023</i>
<i>Thomas P. Walsh</i>	<i>12th Essex</i>	<i>1/18/2023</i>
<i>Sally P. Kerans</i>	<i>13th Essex</i>	<i>1/20/2023</i>

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 3440**

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By Representative Straus of Mattapoisett, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 3440) of William M. Straus, Thomas P. Walsh and Sally P. Kerans for legislation to authorize the installation and operation of digital video violation detection monitoring systems to detect drivers failing to stop for school buses. Transportation.

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[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION  
SEE HOUSE, NO. 3607 OF 2021-2022.]

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

—————  
**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Third General Court  
(2023-2024)**  
—————

An Act concerning the safety of school children embarking and disembarking school buses.

*Whereas*, The deferred operation of this act would tend to defeat its purpose, which is to safeguard student safety, therefore it is hereby declared to be an emergency law, necessary for the immediate preservation of the public safety.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:*

1           SECTION 1. Section 14 of Chapter 90 of the General Laws is hereby amended by  
2 inserting after section 14B the following section:-

3           Section 14C. (a) In addition to other monitoring devices lawfully authorized to be  
4 installed in school buses and notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, any city  
5 or town within the Commonwealth is hereby authorized to install and operate live digital video  
6 school bus violation detection monitoring systems for purpose of enforcing violations against the  
7 owner of a motor vehicle whose vehicle failed to stop for a school bus when required to do so by

8 the provisions of Section 14. Such systems shall be limited to monitor and detect violations of  
9 motorists failing to stop for a school bus. (b) (1) As used in this section, the following words  
10 shall have the following meanings: “School bus violation detection monitoring system” a  
11 camera system that shall monitor and detect motor vehicles overtaking or passing school buses  
12 when said buses are stopped and displaying front and rear alternating flashing red signal lamps  
13 as provided in section seven B, and which has been stopped to allow pupils to alight from or  
14 board the same. It shall be a system with two or more camera sensors and computers that  
15 produce live digital and recorded video and 2 or more film or digital photographic still images of  
16 each motor vehicle at the time it is used or operated in a manner that is in violation of Section 14  
17 of Chapter 90. “Stop arm traffic control sign” a stop sign mounted on a mechanical arm  
18 installed on a school bus which is deployed when a school bus is stopped to allow pupils to alight  
19 from or board the same and notify motorists when it they are required to stop and when they can  
20 proceed. “Violation” the failure of an operator of a motor vehicle to comply with the laws,  
21 codes, regulations, by-laws, ordinances, rules or other forms of legislation governing the traffic  
22 control requirements for school buses stopped to allow pupils to alight from or board same for  
23 which a school bus violation detection monitoring system is installed and in operation. (2) All  
24 systems installed for use under this section shall produce an evidence file that includes a live  
25 visual image viewable remotely, a recorded image of the license plate and be able to record the  
26 date, time and location of the vehicle committing the violation. An affidavit shall be signed by a  
27 person trained to observe and detect such violations who witnesses the violation via live video  
28 provided by the school bus violation detection monitoring system. (3) Recorded video images  
29 and still photographic images must record the rear of the motor vehicle, with at least 1  
30 photographic image and one recorded video image clearly recording the motor vehicle

31 immediately before the violation of the stop arm traffic control sign and at least 1 photographic  
32 image and one recorded video image recording the motor vehicle passing the stopped school bus  
33 with the stop arm traffic control sign deployed in violation of the stop arm traffic control sign.  
34 Additionally, at least 1 photographic image and 1 recorded video image must clearly identify the  
35 license plate of the motor vehicle. (4) To the extent practicable, any school bus violation  
36 detection monitoring system shall use necessary technologies to ensure that photographs or  
37 recorded video images produced by the school bus violation detection monitoring system shall  
38 not include a frontal view photograph or video image of the motor vehicle that is in violation of  
39 the stop arm traffic control sign or images that identify the operator, the passengers, or the  
40 contents of the vehicle, but no notice of liability issued under this section shall be dismissed  
41 solely because a photograph or recorded video image allow for the identification of the operator,  
42 passengers, or contents of a vehicle as long as a reasonable effort has been made to comply with  
43 this paragraph. (5) Any school bus installed with a school bus violation detection monitoring  
44 system shall post warning signage indicating the use of such system. The signage shall remain on  
45 each bus as long as a school bus violation detection monitoring system is in operation. (6) A  
46 penalty imposed for a violation of this section shall not be considered a criminal conviction and  
47 shall not be considered a moving violation of the motor vehicle laws for the purpose of  
48 determining surcharges on motor vehicle premiums pursuant to Section 113B of Chapter 175  
49 although as provided in this section the violation shall be noted on the registered owner or  
50 owner's driving record. (7) The fines contained in this section and section 14 for a failure to  
51 stop for a school bus shall be applied whether the violation is detected through the use of a  
52 school bus mounted violation detection monitoring system or by a police officer on scene who  
53 issues a written citation to the operator of the motor vehicle. Pursuant to the provisions of

54 Section 2 of Chapter 280, all fines imposed for a violation of failing to stop for school bus in  
55 accordance with section 14 that is detected by a school bus violation detection monitoring system  
56 or by a police officer who cites the operator in hand shall be paid over to the treasury of the city  
57 or town where the offense was committed. (8) Wherever an agreement under this section is to  
58 take effect upon its acceptance by a municipality or district, or is to be effective in municipalities  
59 or districts accepting its provisions, this acceptance shall be, except as otherwise provided, in a  
60 municipality, by vote of the legislative body, subject to the charter of the municipality, or, in a  
61 district, by vote of the district at a district meeting. A city or town may enter into an agreement  
62 with a private vendor or manufacturer to provide a school bus violation detection monitoring  
63 system on each bus within its fleet whether owned or leased, up to and including the installation,  
64 operation and maintenance of such systems. Compensation paid to the manufacturer or vendor  
65 of the school bus violation detection monitoring system as authorized by this section shall not be  
66 based upon the revenue generated by the use of such systems. The compensation paid to the  
67 manufacturer or vendor of the equipment shall be based upon the value of the equipment  
68 installed and the recurring services provided in support of the school bus violation detection  
69 monitoring systems including processing of evidence files, cost of the technology provided and  
70 maintenance of such technology. Said agreement shall only become effective after consent by  
71 the affected local or regional school department, by vote of a majority of its governing school  
72 committee. (9) A city or town shall provide reimbursement of expenses to the private vendor or  
73 manufacturer for the installation, operation and maintenance of the school bus violation detection  
74 monitoring systems in operation and acknowledged by an agreement between the private vendor  
75 and the school department that has adopted this section. Unless modified by an agreement with a  
76 city or town, reimbursement shall be made from ticket revenue proceeds incurred under this

77 section only if received as currently allocated under the laws of the Commonwealth for said  
78 citations so as to eliminate any cost to the city or town for installation, operation and  
79 maintenance of the school bus violation detection monitoring systems in its municipality. Such  
80 reimbursement shall be made to the private vendor or manufacturer within 45 days following the  
81 submittal of request for cost reimbursement. Such reimbursement shall not exceed 50% of the  
82 ticket revenue proceeds in any preceding period. If such violations occur on highways or roads  
83 controlled by the Commonwealth, then reimbursement for installing, operating, and maintaining  
84 school bus violation detection systems shall be permitted from the Commonwealth to the private  
85 vendor from ticket proceeds pursuant to this section only. (c) (1) An evidence file of the  
86 alleged violation and the signed affidavit shall be forwarded to a trained law enforcement officer  
87 in the jurisdiction who is trained to observe and detect a violation for failure to stop for a stopped  
88 school bus allowing pupils to alight or board the same. The officer shall issue a citation if he or  
89 she is satisfied that a violation was committed under section 14 and the vehicle committing such  
90 violation can be identified from its registration plate. A certificate, or a facsimile thereof sworn  
91 to or affirmed by a police officer or other law enforcement officer authorized to issue motor  
92 vehicle citations for violations of traffic laws, stating that based upon inspection of the evidence  
93 file produced by a school bus violation detection monitoring system, the vehicle was in violation  
94 of this section, shall be prima facie evidence of the facts contained therein. Any recorded video  
95 images or still photographic images produced by a school bus violation detection monitoring  
96 system evidencing the violation shall be available for inspection in any proceeding to adjudicate  
97 the liability for the violation adopted under this section. (2) In all prosecutions of civil traffic  
98 violations based on evidence obtained from a school bus violation detection monitoring system  
99 the registered owner of the motor vehicle shall be primarily responsible pursuant to the

100 provisions of this chapter except as otherwise provided in this section. In the event the registered  
101 owner of the vehicle operated in violation of this chapter was not the operator of the vehicle at  
102 the time of the violation the registered owner of the vehicle shall either (a) assume liability for  
103 the violation by paying the fine or; (b) upon written receipt of the citation provide the issuing  
104 authority within 30 days of the date of issuance, the name, address and registration number  
105 {license plate} of the operator of the vehicle who was responsible along with a signed affidavit  
106 acknowledging such or; (c) defend the violation pursuant to the procedures established for traffic  
107 violations under this section. A vehicle owned or leased to a corporation that is identified by a  
108 school bus violation detection monitoring system under this section shall be primarily  
109 responsible for a violation pursuant to section 14 even if a person who normally operates the  
110 vehicle for the corporation denies that he or she was operating the vehicle at the time of the  
111 violation although no entry shall be made on the person's driving record. (3) A penalty imposed  
112 may, if so provided in writing, be increased by up to 33 1/3% if the penalty remains unpaid in  
113 excess of 45 days after a citation has been issued consistent with the procedures established in  
114 this section and there has been no request for a hearing under paragraph (3) of subsection (d).  
115 (d) (1) Upon the determination of a violation through the use of a school bus violation detection  
116 monitoring system, it shall be the duty of the chief of police of the city or town, or any designee  
117 of the chief, to issue the owner or owners of the vehicle a citation pursuant to the provisions of  
118 Chapter 90C. The citation shall require the owner or owners to pay the fine amount issued  
119 pursuant to section 14 or appear before the parking clerk not later than 30 days after the date the  
120 citation was sent under the procedures established pursuant to violations under this section. The  
121 citation shall be mailed to the address of the registered owner or owners as contained in the  
122 registry or in records of the Department of Motor Vehicles in the jurisdiction in which the

123 vehicle is registered if other than the Commonwealth for any motor vehicle identified by the  
124 school bus violation detection monitoring system as evidence of a violation of this section.  
125 Citations shall be mailed by first class mail, post marked no later than 14 days after the date of  
126 the alleged violation, inclusive of Sundays and holidays. In the case of any motor vehicle  
127 registered under the laws of another state or country, if the address is unavailable, it shall be  
128 sufficient to mail the citation to the official in the state or country having charge of the  
129 registration of the motor vehicle. The citation shall be considered sufficient notice, and a  
130 certificate of the chief of police or the chief's designee mailing the citation stating that it has  
131 been mailed in accordance with this section shall be deemed prima facie evidence thereof and  
132 shall be admissible in any judicial or administrative proceeding as to the facts contained therein.  
133 It shall be sufficient to commence a prosecution. The chief or the chief's designee shall retain  
134 and safely preserve a copy of the Citation and shall at a time no later than the beginning of the  
135 next business day of the city or town after mailing to the owner or owners, deliver another copy  
136 to the parking clerk before whom the owner or owners have been notified to appear. The parking  
137 clerk shall maintain a docket of all such notices to appear. For purposes of this section, the date  
138 of issuance shall be the date of mailing. The police officer issuing the citation shall certify that  
139 the evidence obtained from the school bus violation detection monitoring system was sufficient  
140 to demonstrate a violation of section 14. Such certification shall be sufficient in all prosecutions  
141 pursuant to this section to justify the entry of a default judgment in all cases where the citation is  
142 not answered within the time period permitted under this section. The citation issued by the  
143 trained law enforcement officer in the jurisdiction shall contain but not be limited to the  
144 following information: (i) a citation for the violation, which shall include the name and address  
145 of the person or persons liable as an owner or owners of the motor vehicle for the violation of



146 this section, the registration number and state of issuance of the registration number of the  
147 vehicle involved in the violation, the date, time and location of the violation, the specific  
148 violation charged, the amount of the penalty for the violation, and the date by which the penalty  
149 shall be paid; (ii) a copy of two or more still photographs, microphotographs, video or other  
150 recorded images showing the vehicle in violation of the stop arm traffic sign; (iii) a copy of the  
151 certificate or affidavit of the police officer under paragraph (1) of subsection (c); (iv) a  
152 statement that recorded video images and photographic images are evidence of a violation of  
153 section 14; (v) a schedule of fines for the violation as established by the Commonwealth; (vi)  
154 instructions for the return of the citation notice including but not limited to the following text:—  
155 “This notice and the required payment may be returned in person, by mail, or by a duly  
156 authorized agent. A hearing to contest liability may be obtained upon the written request of the  
157 registered owner. Failure to pay the penalty or to contest liability within 30 days of issuance of  
158 this notice is an admission of liability and may result in a default judgment being entered against  
159 the owner to whom the violation has been issued and/or non-renewal or suspension of the license  
160 to drive and the certificate of registration of the registered owner.”; (vii) an affidavit form  
161 approved by the parking clerk for the purpose of complying with paragraph (5);and (viii) a  
162 statement explaining the procedure to adjudicate the violation by mail under paragraph (6) . (2)  
163 Any person notified to appear before the parking clerk, as provided in this section, may appear  
164 before the parking clerk, or his designee, and confess the offense charged, either personally or  
165 through a duly authorized agent or by mailing to the parking clerk the notice accompanied by the  
166 fine provided therein, such payment to be made only by postal note, money order or check made  
167 out to the parking clerk. Payment of the penalty established shall operate as a final disposition of  
168 the case. (3) Except as expressly provided, all prosecutions based on evidence produced by a

169 school bus violation detection monitoring system shall follow the procedures of this section.  
170 Notwithstanding the installation and use of a live digital video school bus violation detection  
171 monitoring system on a school bus, a trained police officer in whose presence of motorist failing  
172 to stop for a stopped school bus as required under section 14, may issue a citation at the scene to  
173 the operator of such vehicle for such violation pursuant to section 14. An owner of a vehicle  
174 shall not be liable for a citation as a result of a school bus violation detection monitoring system  
175 if the operator of the vehicle was cited directly by a police officer at the scene of the violation.

176 (4) Should any person notified to appear hereunder fail to appear and, if a penalty is provided  
177 hereunder, to pay the same, or if the person requests a hearing to contest liability, the parking  
178 clerk shall forthwith schedule the matter before a person referred to in this section as a hearing  
179 officer. The hearing officer shall be the parking clerk of the city or town in which the violation  
180 occurred or any other person or persons that the parking clerk may designate. Written notice of  
181 the date, time and place of the hearing shall be sent by first-class mail to the registered owner or  
182 owners. The hearing shall be informal, the rules of evidence shall not apply and the decision of  
183 the hearing officer shall be final subject to judicial review as provided by Section 14 of Chapter  
184 30A. Within 21 days of the hearing, the hearing officer shall send by first class mail to the  
185 registered owner or owners the decision of the hearing officer, including the reasons for the  
186 outcome. (5) Any owner to whom a citation has been issued shall not be liable for a violation of  
187 this section (a) if the violation was necessary to allow the passage of an emergency vehicle; (b) if  
188 the violation was necessary in order to protect the property or person of another; (c) if the  
189 violation was incurred while participating in a funeral procession; (d) if the violation was  
190 incurred during a period of time in which the motor vehicle was reported to the police  
191 department of any state, city or town as having been stolen and had not been recovered before

192 the time the violation occurred; (e) if the operator of the motor vehicle was operating the motor  
193 vehicle under a rental or lease agreement and the owner of the motor vehicle is a rental or leasing  
194 company; (f) if the operator of the motor vehicle was convicted of the underlying violation under  
195 a citation issued in accordance with Section 2 of Chapter 90C; (g) if the violation was necessary  
196 to comply with an order of a law enforcement officer or of a flagger directing traffic flow; or (h)  
197 if the vehicle was subject to the exceptions granted to an authorized emergency vehicle under  
198 Section 7B of Chapter 89. An owner disputing a violation under this subsection shall, within 30  
199 days of issuance of the notice, provide the parking clerk with an affidavit signed under the pains  
200 and penalties of perjury in a form approved by the parking clerk, as provided for in clause (vii)  
201 of paragraph (1) of this subsection stating (1) the reason for disputing the violation; (2) the full  
202 legal name and address of the owner of the motor vehicle; (3) the names and addresses of all  
203 witnesses supporting the owner's defense and the specifics of their knowledge; and where  
204 applicable (4) the signed statements from witnesses. The affidavit shall be filed with the request  
205 for a hearing. (6) Any person notified to appear before the parking clerk, as provided in this  
206 paragraph, may without waiving his right to a hearing before the parking clerk or hearing officer  
207 as provided by this subsection, and also without waiving judicial review under Section 14 of  
208 Chapter 30A, challenge the validity of the citation and receive a review and disposition of the  
209 violation from the parking clerk or a hearing officer by mail. The owner may, upon receipt of  
210 the citation, send a signed statement explaining his objections to the violation notice as well as  
211 signed statements from witnesses, police officers, government officials and any other relevant  
212 parties. Photographs, diagrams, maps and other documents may also be sent with the statements.  
213 Any statements or materials sent to the parking clerk for review shall have attached the person's  
214 name and address as well as the citation number and the date of the violation. The parking clerk

215 or hearing officer shall, within 21 days of receipt of this material, review the material and  
216 dismiss or uphold the violation and notify, by mail, the owner or owners of the disposition of the  
217 written review. If the outcome of the written review is adverse to the owner or owners, the  
218 parking clerk or hearing officer shall explain the reasons for the outcome on the notice. The  
219 review and disposition handled by mail shall be informal, the rules of evidence shall not apply,  
220 and the decision of the parking clerk or hearing officer based upon the written materials shall be  
221 final, unless the owner invokes the hearing provisions under this section or judicial review under  
222 Section 14 of Chapter 30A. (7) If any person fails to appear before the hearing officer in  
223 accordance with the notice, or fails to receive a favorable adjudication of the hearing from a  
224 hearing officer and fails to pay the fine within 30 days of the date that the hearing officer has  
225 mailed notice of the decision of the hearing officer, the parking clerk shall notify the registrar of  
226 motor vehicles, who shall place the matter on record. Upon notification to the registrar of 2 or  
227 more citations under this section or section 14 from the parking clerk of the city or town, or state  
228 authorities or agencies, the registrar shall not issue or renew or may suspend the owner's license  
229 to operate a motor vehicle or motor vehicle registration until after notification from the parking  
230 clerk of each city, agency or authority, from whom the registrar received notification, that all  
231 fines, taxes and penalties owed by the owner under this section have been disposed of in  
232 accordance with law. Upon such notification to the registrar, an additional charge of \$20 payable  
233 to the registrar but collected by the city or town, and an additional charge of \$20 payable to and  
234 collected by the city or town, shall be assessed against the registered owner of the motor vehicle.  
235 It shall be the duty of the parking clerk to notify the registrar forthwith that the case has been so  
236 disposed, but certified receipt of full and final payment from the parking clerk of the city or  
237 town, or state agency or authority issuing the violation shall also serve as legal notice to the

238 registrar that the violation has been disposed of in accordance with law. The certified receipt  
239 shall be printed in a form approved by the registrar of motor vehicles. (8) Upon the  
240 accumulation by an owner of 2 or more outstanding citations under this section or section 14 on  
241 account of violations of any statute, ordinance, order, rule or regulation relating to the operation,  
242 control or parking of motor vehicles in a particular city or town, notwithstanding any notification  
243 to the registrar, the parking clerk of the city or town may notify the chief of police or director of  
244 traffic and parking of the city or town that the vehicle bearing the registration to which the  
245 notices have been issued shall be removed and stored or otherwise immobilized by a mechanical  
246 device at the expense of the registered owner of the vehicle until all fines, taxes and penalties  
247 owed by the owner either under this section, or otherwise arising out of the parking or usage of  
248 the owner's motor vehicle, have been disposed of in accordance with law. No vehicle shall be  
249 removed, stored, or otherwise immobilized unless the owner of the motor vehicle shall have  
250 received 10 days prior notification by mail that the motor vehicle may be removed, stored, or  
251 immobilized without further notification. It shall be sufficient for the parking clerk to mail,  
252 postage prepaid, the notification to the last known address of the registered owner. It shall be  
253 sufficient for the parking clerk, in the case of a motor vehicle registered in another state or  
254 country, to mail notification to the official in the state or country having charge of the  
255 registration of the motor vehicle. (e)(1) Other than for purposes of enforcement of a violation of  
256 this section and section 14 or for purposes of an owner defending a violation of this section,  
257 recorded video images and photographs taken or created under this section may only be obtained  
258 under an order by a court of competent jurisdiction. (2) All recorded video images and other  
259 photographic information obtained through the use of school bus violation detection monitoring  
260 systems authorized in this section that do not identify a violation shall be destroyed by any city,

261 town, school department or vendor within 30 days of the date the image was recorded, unless  
262 otherwise ordered by a court of competent jurisdiction. All photographic and other recorded  
263 information that identifies a violation shall be destroyed within 1 year of final disposition of  
264 proceedings related to the enforcement or defense of a violation, unless otherwise ordered by a  
265 court of competent jurisdiction. Each city, town, school department, and vendor under agreement  
266 utilizing 1 or more school bus violation detection monitoring systems shall file notice attested  
267 under penalties of perjury annually within 30 days of the close of the fiscal year with the  
268 secretary of state that these records have been destroyed in accordance with this paragraph. All  
269 recorded video, audio and other photographic information, however stored or retained, which is  
270 obtained through systems authorized in this section are the property of the municipality under  
271 agreement with a vendor and may not be used by a vendor for any other purposes; upon the  
272 expiration of any agreement authorized under this section, all of said video, audio, and/or other  
273 photographic information shall be delivered within 30 days to the particular municipality unless  
274 otherwise ordered by a court of competent jurisdiction. (3) The administrator of the school bus  
275 violation detection monitoring system within any city or town accepting this section shall also  
276 submit an annual report to the Massachusetts Department of Transportation regarding the use  
277 and operation of the monitoring system. This annual report shall contain data on the number of  
278 citations issued under this section at each particular intersection, and of those citations, shall  
279 detail the number paid without a request for a hearing; the number found responsible after a  
280 hearing; and the number dismissed after a hearing. In addition, the report shall also include the  
281 cost to maintain each said monitoring system and the amount of revenue obtained from each said  
282 monitoring system.