

Colorado School District Transportation Directors Supporting HB-1437

April 6, 2016

Members of the Colorado General Assembly:

The area outside stopped school busses present a serious safety risk for students. School districts across the country are implementing safety initiatives to reduce school bus stop arm violations. We respectfully request that you consider the attached minor amendment that would narrowly address a defect with Colorado's school bus stop arm statute that makes it virtually unenforceable. This change would enable school district's and local law enforcement to enforce Colorado's stop arm laws.

The National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Service (NASDPTS) has cited facts showing most school transportation-related deaths occur outside stopped school busses and deemed the area the "danger zone." The Colorado Department of Education concluded that the number of stop arm violations in Colorado is "alarming" and cited a 2014 study which demonstrated a limited number of busses reported 646 school bus stop arm violations in a single day. Multiple national news outlets have recently focused on what states are doing to address the dangers posed by stop arm violations.

In Colorado, state law controls stop arm enforcement but the state law is virtually unenforceable in its current form. Colorado Revised Statute § 42-4-1903 requires *the school bus driver* to record and submit a list of information related to a stop arm violation, including a description of the vehicle and license plate number, to law enforcement. As Colorado School District Transportation Directors, we can tell you that school bus drivers must attend to their primary responsibilities of driving the bus and managing student safety and cannot also serve this law enforcement function. Boarding/unboarding students along busy roads is a critical and busy time and enforcement of the existing Colorado law is just not practicable. Colorado Revised Statute § 42-4-1903 should be amended to allow law enforcement to issue stop arm traffic citations to the registered owner of the vehicle without requiring school bus driver's to handle the process.

We believe the attached legislation is a narrow amendment that serves this purpose and would be in the best interest of student safety. Thank you for considering our position on this important matter.

Sincerely,

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