



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
**Testimony in Support of HB 4147**

February 12, 2024

Vice Chairs Hudson and Wright and members of the Education Committee,

As a parent, educator, and legislator with a focus on how our communities can be safer for our children, I am here advocating for HB4147. This legislation will serve to improve the safety of our children on their daily commute to and from school on our big yellow school buses. It will allow an education provider (such as a school district) to contract with a stop arm camera entity and enter into an agreement with law enforcement to ensure greater accountability for drivers in our communities.

I was first alerted to the issue of drivers illegally passing school buses by Sean Sypes, a student at Wilsonville High School who reached out with a concern about why Oregon doesn't allow stop arm cameras on school buses. After witnessing a driver dangerously speed past while his friend was getting off their bus after school he began to look into what could be done to hold people accountable for this dangerous behavior. My team and I got right to work turning his idea into a bill. He was able to testify in person during the 2023 session when this concept was first introduced but is at school today and has submitted his testimony into the written record. I hope you will review it.

A 2023 nationwide survey of bus drivers showed concerning data. Across the country, over 62,000 vehicles unlawfully overtook school buses within the same survey period. Oregon-specific data showed that our bus drivers documented **1,427 stop arm camera violations in a single day**. This is a staggering number of violations.

Bus drivers play a key role in keeping our kiddos safe on their way to and from school. Our school buses play an important role in facilitating our children's education and the safety of these young passengers is paramount. Currently, the primary safety mechanisms are provided by the bus's stop arm and flashing lights, along with the vigilance of the bus driver. While these measures are essential, they should not operate

in isolation. I believe this bill provides an opportunity to embrace existing technology. I am grateful for the partnership of OSEA who has helped us ensure that this will not be a burden for our workforce, but hopefully a supportive tool to augment safety.

Essentially, House Bill 4147 removes the current prohibition in Oregon on stop arm camera use and allows (but does NOT require) school districts to partner with law enforcement. With this concept, we open the door to a safety framework that combines human vigilance with technological capability. Signage that a stop arm camera is in use will be required to be posted on the school bus and the State Board of Education will adopt standards for the signage. Just as we know that red light cameras don't stop all violations at intersections, I do not have any illusion that this will solve all safety concerns around people who ignore the stop sign and flashing lights when children are getting off their bus and crossing the street. In such instances, however, evidence of a violation may be captured by the camera, shared with law enforcement, and reviewed by a police officer prior to citation. In partnership with other initiatives, hopefully this can keep our streets a bit safer and promote a culture of understanding of driver expectations as buses pick up and deliver kids home.

Thank you for your consideration. I would especially like to thank (my staff: Marcella Martinson and Laurie Skillman, as well as Pablo Nieves Valenzuela and Sara Kim who worked on it this in 2023) the League of Oregon Cities, Sherwood Police Chief Hanlon and Oregon School Employees Association for their partnership in making this 2024 version of the bill polished and ready for passage. And as the representative for the many children who ride the school bus to their schools in King City, Sherwood, Tigard, Wilsonville, Newberg and even a few in Canby I urge your support of HB4147.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Courtney Neron". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Representative Courtney Neron  
House District 26 | Wilsonville, King City, Sherwood, Tigard