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BILL: House Bill 495  
TITLE: School Bus Monitoring Cameras – Civil Penalty  
DATE: February 23, 2017  
POSITION: SUPPORT  
COMMITTEE: Environment and Transportation  
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House Bill 495 alters the civil penalty to require \$250 for a violation recorded by a school bus monitoring camera for failure to stop for a school vehicle operating alternately flashing red lights; and repeals a requirement that the District Court prescribe a specified civil penalty.

PSSAM wholeheartedly SUPPORTS House Bill 495. School bus safety is of paramount concern to all local superintendents. PSSAM strongly believes that all students should be able to enter and exit a school bus without concern for their safety when vehicles illegally pass a bus with flashing red lights and a stop arm swing extended.

Stop arms swing out from a bus and lights flash whenever it is making an on-roadway student pick-up. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) reported in September 2016 that a total of 4,326 violations of school bus stop arms were recorded on a single day in spring 2016. Although well below the 7,011 recorded when the survey began in 2011, the number represents a significant jump over the 2,795 recorded in 2015. MSDE coordinated the survey in April last year along with school transportation directors in all 24 school systems. It is considered a snapshot of illegal activity on the roads. Seventy-six percent of Maryland school bus drivers took part in the survey. The MSDE survey this past spring was undertaken at the behest of a number of members of the Maryland General Assembly, which has been monitoring school bus safety.

Last August, concerns over school bus safety prompted Governor Hogan to release more than \$500,000 to local law enforcement agencies to help them enforce Maryland school bus safety laws. The grants will be used to pay for overtime for police officers who patrol streets when school buses are on the road and for public education programs to inform the driving public about Maryland's law requiring drivers to stop when a school bus has stopped to pick up or drop off passengers. The passage of House Bill 495 will be yet another step in the right direction as we all work together to keep students out of harm's way.

Again, PSSAM **SUPPORTS** House Bill 495 for the reasons stated above and requests a favorable committee report.