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Scott C. McElree, Chief of Police

Re: HB 1284 – Strengthening School Bus Safety Law

To: The Honorable Members of the Senate Transportation Committee

I write to convey my strong support for the language contained in HB 1284 that seeks to update Pennsylvania's automated school bus stop arm camera program. This critical language is aimed at strengthening the School Bus Safety Law in Pennsylvania and ensuring the safety of our students and communities.

The State of Pennsylvania deserves credit for passing landmark legislation that enables school districts to leverage cutting-edge technology to improve traffic safety around school buses and ultimately save lives. As a result, dozens of school districts, big and small, have already implemented violator-funded stop-arm enforcement programs that use automated camera systems to catch motorists that illegally pass a stopped school bus. These actions are not only in direct violation of State law, but they recklessly endanger the lives of our children getting on and off the bus. Without this cutting-edge technology, it is nearly impossible to catch and deter these violators in the first place.

While we are pleased that these programs are producing their intended effect, we recognize that the process can be improved. To that end, HB 1284 seeks to provide greater clarity to the adjudication process of school bus stop-arm camera violations while creating efficiencies around the contestation process.

The amendment would also centralize and streamline the process to ensure that every resident who wants to contest their stop-arm violation may do so in a fair and expeditious manner, as the law intended. This includes the ability for residents to contest their violations through live-stream or video conferencing settings as opposed to traveling to and from a location.

I am proud to join law enforcement and school officials from around the State to support this measure that would help local school bus stop-arm camera programs run smoother. I respectfully ask that you support this amendment to improve the safety of our children.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Donald Bender".

Donald Bender
Lieutenant