



Oregon School Employees Association

www.osea.org

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House Education Committee
Rep. Courtney Neron, Chair

Chair Neron and members of the committee:

As you know, the Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA) represents more than 24,000 workers who support all levels of public education in Oregon's 36 counties, including Head Start programs, K-12 school districts, education service districts (ESD), parks and community colleges. Classified employees are a key group of frontline caregivers who support Oregon's students every day, including some of the most economically and medically fragile.

OSEA is happy to testify in support of House Bill (HB) 4147 and the -5 amendments, which will help counter an increasing threat to student safety without adding to bus drivers' already long list of responsibilities.

We are pleased to have worked closely with Chair Neron and her staff on crafting such a thoughtful solution to the issue of drivers ignoring stop arms and passing stopped school buses. We all know this behavior is illegal and dangerous and, alarmingly, our members who drive buses every day say incidents are increasing. Our drivers want to be able to do more to protect their students but they are already responsible for the bus and all the kids inside. They're frustrated and saddened that there's often nothing more they can do to protect the kids walking just outside the bus.

Fortunately, deploying cameras on the stop arms of our school buses can provide a deterrent – hopefully a strong one – to drivers who might otherwise illegally pass a bus and put students at risk with their impatience. We appreciate that the bill and amendments will:

- Empower districts to deploy these cameras with strong sideboards around their use.
- Direct proactive communication to potentially affected workers.
- Reinforce that traffic citations are a law enforcement function rather than an educational one.

The -5 amendments require school districts to communicate with their bus drivers and other potentially affected workers to ensure minimal disruption to existing practices while maximizing student protection.

Highly skilled school bus drivers are in short supply statewide, and we recognize that this is in part because the job is already not easy. It's important to OSEA that we continue to support bus drivers' work as guardians of students every day while not increasing

*The Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA) is an affiliate of
the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and the AFL-CIO.*





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distractions or their workload. Through the collaborative work on amendments to this bill, we are confident that we have achieved just such a solution: an answer to bus drivers' concerns about student safety outside the bus that does not simply add to their existing responsibilities.

OSEA strongly urges your support for HB 4147 with the -5 amendments.

Sincerely,

Bob Estabrook
OSEA Government Relations Specialist

