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Substitute Bill Comparative Synopsis

Sub. H.B. 279

135th General Assembly

House Transportation

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This table summarizes how the latest substitute version of the bill differs from the immediately preceding version. It addresses only the topics on which the two versions differ substantively. It does not list topics on which the two bills are substantively the same.

Previous Version (As Introduced)	Latest Version (I_135_1512-9)
Seat belts on school buses	
Within five years of the bill's effective date, requires every school bus purchased, owned, leased, or rented by a school or school district to be equipped with occupant restraining devices (i.e., seat belts) for every student on the school bus.	No provision.
Requires the Ohio State Highway Patrol to enforce the seat belt requirement as part of its regular inspections of school bus equipment. (R.C. 4511.773.)	No provision.

Previous Version (As Introduced)	Latest Version (I_135_1512-9)
School Bus Safety Fund and Grant Program	
No provision.	Creates the School Bus Safety Fund in the state treasury, consisting of money appropriated by the General Assembly and criminal fines collected for violations of passing a stopped school bus.
No provision.	Requires the Director of Education and Workforce to administer the fund and use the money in it to make grants to school districts to improve the safety features on school buses and to support efforts to educate the public regarding the laws governing school bus safety. <i>(R.C. 3327.18.)</i>
No provision.	Requires the Department of Education and Workforce to administer a School Bus Safety Grant Program to assist eligible applicants (public entities that own and operate school buses) with the cost of installing recommended safety features on new and existing school buses.
No provision.	<p>Establishes the general parameters of the Grant Program; and requires the Department to establish any necessary procedures and requirements to administer it. <i>(R.C. 3327.19.)</i></p> <p>Requires the transfer of \$25 million cash from the GRF to the School Bus Safety Fund, created by the bill, and appropriates it to the fund for fiscal year 2025.</p> <p>Requires the money to be used for the purposes designated for that fund, and reappropriates any unexpended and unencumbered portion for fiscal year 2026. <i>(Sections 3, 4, 5, and 6)</i></p>

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Penalties for illegally passing a stopped school bus	
No provision.	<p>Increases the penalties for illegally passing a stopped school bus that is loading or unloading passengers as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Specifies that the offense is an unclassified misdemeanor (current law has no specification); ▪ Requires the court to impose a \$250 to \$1,000 fine on a first-time offender, instead of a permissive fine of \$0 to \$500 fine as under current law; ▪ Requires the court to impose a \$350 to \$2,000 fine on an offender who committed the same offense within five years of the current violation; ▪ Authorizes the court to lower the fine for a first-time offender to \$150, if the offender attends and successfully completes a school bus safety course; ▪ Authorizes the court to impose a class six driver's license suspension (three months to two years) on a first-time offender, instead of a class seven suspension (up to one year) as under current law; ▪ Requires the court to impose a class five (six months to three years) driver's license suspension on an offender who committed the same offense within five years of the current violation; ▪ Requires a repeat offender to attend and successfully complete a school bus safety course, developed by the Director of Public Safety;

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No provision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Imposes two points on the driver’s license of a first-time offender and four points on the driver’s license of a person who repeats the offense within the prior five years, as opposed to only two points in all circumstances as under current law; and ▪ Authorizes the court to waive the imposition of points for a first-time offender who attends and successfully completes a school bus safety course. <i>(R.C. 4510.036(C)(14) and 4511.75(F).)</i> <p>Requires all fines collected for such violations to be paid into the School Bus Safety Fund. <i>(R.C. 4511.75(G).)</i></p>
School bus cameras	
No provision.	Authorizes the installation and use of school bus camera equipment that can capture an image, images, or video solely for purposes of recording violations of passing a stopped school bus.
No provision.	Requires the Department of Public Safety, with the advice of the Department of Education and Workforce, to adopt rules governing the school bus cameras, but prohibits them from authorizing cameras for automated enforcement. <i>(R.C. 4511.76(A).)</i>
No provision.	Authorizes a school bus driver to use the image, images, or video captured by a school bus camera to corroborate the driver’s report of a possible violation of passing the driver’s stopped school bus.
No provision.	Authorizes law enforcement to use the image, images, or video captured by the school bus camera in its investigation of an alleged violation, provided the image, images, or video are sufficiently clear.

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	Prohibits law enforcement from issuing a citation solely based on an image, images, or video captured by a school bus camera, but allows them to corroborate other evidence and the school bus driver's report. <i>(R.C. 4511.751(B) and (C).)</i>
Public education on school bus safety	
No provision.	Requires each deputy registrar and driver examination location to display, at all times and in a prominent place, a graphic that instructs drivers to stop and yield to a stopped school bus that is loading or unloading passengers.
No provision.	Requires the Registrar of Motor Vehicles to create and issue the graphic and to display it on the Bureau of Motor Vehicle's website. <i>(R.C. 4503.03(D)(1)(m).)</i>
No provision.	Requires the Registrar and deputy registrars to provide access to, at the time of issuing license plates or a driver's license to any person, and to post on the BMV's website, a summary of all of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The requirement to stop and yield to a school bus that is stopped to load or unload passengers; ▪ The penalties for failing to stop and yield to that stopped school bus; and ▪ The process that allows a witness to an illegal passing of a stopped school bus to corroborate the school bus driver's report to law enforcement. <i>(R.C. 4511.751(D).)</i>

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No provision.	Generally, requires the Department of Public Safety, in conjunction with the Department of Education and Workforce, to educate the public regarding the laws pertaining to school bus safety. <i>(R.C. 4511.76(A).)</i>
Designations and other provisions	
No provision.	Designates the month of August as “School Bus Safety Month.” <i>(R.C. 5.501)</i>
No provision.	Clarifies that a person may pass a stopped school bus if directed to do so by a law enforcement officer. <i>(R.C. 4511.75(A)(1).)</i>
No provision.	Modifies provisions of current law that authorize the use of certain ten-passenger vehicles used in lieu of a school bus for transportation of students to specify that the vehicle must have been originally designed and manufactured for not more than ten passengers (including the driver). <i>(R.C. 4511.76.)</i>
No provision.	Names the bill the “School Bus Safety Act.” <i>(Section 7.)</i>