

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2017

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SENATE BILL 55

Short Title: School Bus Cameras/Civil Penalties. (Public)

Sponsors: Senators McInnis and Alexander (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to: Rules and Operations of the Senate

February 9, 2017

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO AUTHORIZE THE USE OF PHOTOGRAPHIC OR VIDEO EVIDENCE FOR  
THE CIVIL ENFORCEMENT OF VIOLATIONS FOR PASSING A STOPPED SCHOOL  
BUS.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

**SECTION 1.** Article 12 of Chapter 153A of the General Statutes is amended by  
adding a new section to read:

**"§ 153A-246. Use of photographs or videos recorded by automated school bus safety  
cameras.**

(a) Definitions. – The following definitions apply in this section:

(1) Automated school bus safety camera. – As defined in G.S. 115C-242.1.

(2) Officials or agents. – This term includes a local board of education located  
within the county or a private vendor contracted with under G.S. 115C-242.1.

(3) School bus. – As used in G.S. 20-217.

(b) Civil Enforcement. – A county may adopt an ordinance for the civil enforcement of  
G.S. 20-217 by means of an automated school bus safety camera installed and operated on any  
school bus located within that county. Notwithstanding the provisions of G.S. 14-4, in the event  
that a county adopts an ordinance pursuant to this section, a violation of the ordinance shall not be  
an infraction. An ordinance authorized by this subsection shall provide all of the following:

(1) The notice of the violation shall be given in the form of a citation and shall be  
received by the registered owner of the vehicle no more than 60 days after the  
date of the violation.

(2) The registered owner of a vehicle shall be responsible for a violation unless the  
vehicle was, at the time of the violation, in the care, custody, or control of  
another person or unless the citation was not received by the registered owner  
within 60 days after the date of the violation.

(3) A person wishing to contest a citation shall, within 30 days after receiving the  
citation, deliver to the officials or agents of the county that issued the citation a  
written request for a hearing accompanied by an affidavit stating the basis for  
contesting the citation, including, as applicable:

a. The name and address of the person other than the registered owner who  
had the care, custody, or control of the vehicle.

b. A statement that the vehicle involved was stolen at the time of the  
violation, with a copy of any insurance report or police report  
supporting this statement.



- 1                   c.     A statement that the citation was not received within 60 days after the  
2                   date of the violation, and a statement of the date on which the citation  
3                   was received.
- 4                   d.     A copy of a criminal pleading charging the person with a violation of  
5                   G.S. 20-217 arising out of the same facts as those for which the citation  
6                   was issued.
- 7           (4)   The citation shall include all of the following:
- 8                   a.     The date and time of the violation, the location of the violation, the  
9                   amount of the civil monetary penalty imposed, and the date by which  
10                  the civil monetary penalty shall be paid or contested.
- 11                  b.     An image taken from the recorded image showing the vehicle involved  
12                  in the violation.
- 13                  c.     A copy of a statement or electronically generated affirmation of a  
14                  county employee, or a law enforcement officer employed by a law  
15                  enforcement agency with whom an agreement has been reached  
16                  pursuant to G.S. 115C-242.1(c), stating that, based upon inspection of  
17                  the recorded images, the owner's motor vehicle was operated in  
18                  violation of the ordinance adopted pursuant to this subsection.
- 19                  d.     Instructions explaining the manner in which, and the time within which,  
20                  liability under the citation may be contested pursuant to subdivision (3)  
21                  of this subsection.
- 22                  e.     A warning that failure to pay the civil monetary penalty or to contest  
23                  liability in a timely manner shall waive any right to contest liability and  
24                  shall result in a late penalty of one hundred dollars (\$100.00), in  
25                  addition to the civil monetary penalty.
- 26                  f.     In citations issued to the registered owner of the vehicle, a warning that  
27                  failure to pay the civil monetary penalty or to contest liability in a  
28                  timely manner shall result in refusal by the Division of Motor Vehicles  
29                  to register the motor vehicle, in addition to imposition of the civil  
30                  monetary penalty and late penalty.
- 31           (5)   Violations of the ordinance shall be deemed a noncriminal violation for which a  
32                  civil penalty shall be assessed and for which no points authorized by  
33                  G.S. 20-16(c) and no insurance points authorized by G.S. 58-36-65 shall be  
34                  assigned to the registered owner or driver of the vehicle. The amount of such  
35                  penalty shall be four hundred dollars (\$400.00) for the first offense, seven  
36                  hundred fifty dollars (\$750.00) for the second violation, and one thousand  
37                  dollars (\$1,000) for each subsequent violation of the ordinance.
- 38           (6)   If a registered owner provides an affidavit that the vehicle was, at the time of  
39                  the violation, in the care, custody, or control of another person or company, the  
40                  identified person or company may be issued a citation complying with the  
41                  requirements of subdivision (4) of this subsection.
- 42           (7)   The citation shall be processed by officials or agents of the county and shall be  
43                  served by any method permitted for service of process pursuant to G.S. 1A-1,  
44                  Rule 4 of the North Carolina Rules of Civil Procedure, or by first-class mail to  
45                  the address of the registered owner of the vehicle provided on the motor vehicle  
46                  registration or, as applicable, to the address of the person identified in an  
47                  affidavit submitted by the registered owner of the vehicle.
- 48           (8)   If the person to whom a citation is issued makes a timely request for a hearing  
49                  pursuant to subdivision (3) of this subsection, a summons shall be issued by any  
50                  method permitted for service of process pursuant to G.S. 1A-1, Rule 4 of the  
51                  North Carolina Rules of Civil Procedure, directing the person to appear at the

- 1 place and time specified in the summons in order to contest the citation at an  
2 administrative hearing.
- 3 (9) A citation recipient who, within 30 days after receiving the citation, fails either  
4 to pay the civil penalty or to request a hearing to contest the citation shall have  
5 waived the right to contest responsibility for the violation and shall be subject  
6 to a late penalty of one hundred dollars (\$100.00) in addition to the civil penalty  
7 assessed under this subsection.
- 8 (10) The county shall institute a nonjudicial administrative hearing to hear contested  
9 citations or penalties issued or assessed under this section. The decision on a  
10 contested citation shall be rendered in writing within five days after the hearing  
11 and shall be served upon the person contesting the citation by any method  
12 permitted for service of process pursuant to G.S. 1A-1, Rule 4 of the North  
13 Carolina Rules of Civil Procedure. If the decision is adverse to the person  
14 contesting the citation, the decision shall contain instructions explaining the  
15 manner and the time within which the decision may be appealed pursuant to  
16 subdivision (11) of this subsection.
- 17 (11) A person may appeal to the district court division of the General Court of  
18 Justice from any adverse decision on a contested citation by filing notice of  
19 appeal in the office of the clerk of superior court. Enforcement of an adverse  
20 decision shall be stayed pending the outcome of a timely appeal. Except as  
21 otherwise provided in this subdivision, appeal shall be in accordance with the  
22 procedure set forth in Article 19 of Chapter 7A of the General Statutes  
23 applicable to appeals from the magistrate to the district court. For purposes of  
24 calculating the time within which any action must be taken to meet procedural  
25 requirements of the appeal, the date upon which the person contesting the  
26 citation is served with the adverse decision shall be deemed to be the date of  
27 entry of judgment.
- 28 (12) A civil penalty shall not be imposed under this subsection against a person who  
29 is charged in a criminal pleading with a violation of G.S. 20-217 arising out of  
30 the same facts as those for which the civil penalty would be imposed.
- 31 (13) If a citation is not contested pursuant to subdivision (3) of this subsection,  
32 payment of the civil penalty is due within 30 days after receipt of the citation. If  
33 the citation is contested, and the result of the administrative hearing held  
34 pursuant to subdivision (10) of this subsection is a decision adverse to the  
35 citation recipient, then payment is due within 30 days after receipt of the  
36 adverse decision, unless the citation recipient appeals the adverse decision  
37 pursuant to subdivision (11) of this subsection. If the adverse decision is  
38 appealed, and if the final decision on appeal is adverse to the citation recipient,  
39 then payment of the civil penalty is due within 30 days after the citation  
40 recipient receives notice of the final adverse decision on appeal.
- 41 (14) If the registered owner of a motor vehicle who receives a citation fails to pay  
42 the civil penalty when due, the Division of Motor Vehicles shall refuse to  
43 register the motor vehicle for the owner in accordance with G.S. 20-54(11). The  
44 county may establish procedures for providing notice to the Division of Motor  
45 Vehicles and for the collection of these penalties and may enforce the penalties  
46 by civil action in the nature of debt.
- 47 (c) Notice. – An automated school bus safety camera installed on a school bus must be  
48 identified by appropriate warning signs conspicuously posted on the school bus. All warning signs  
49 shall be consistent with a statewide standard adopted by the State Board of Education in  
50 conjunction with local boards of education that install and operate automated school bus safety  
51 cameras on their school buses.

- 1       (d) Application. – Nothing in this section shall be construed to do any of the following:  
2           (1) Require the installation and operation of automated school bus safety cameras  
3           on a school bus.  
4           (2) Prohibit the use and admissibility of any photograph or video recorded by an  
5           automated school bus safety camera in any criminal proceeding alleging a  
6           violation of G.S. 20-217.  
7           (3) Prohibit the imposition of penalties, including the assignment of points  
8           authorized by G.S. 20-16(c) and insurance points authorized by G.S. 58-36-65,  
9           on any registered owner or driver of the vehicle convicted of a misdemeanor or  
10          felony violation of G.S. 20-217."

11       **SECTION 2.** Article 17 of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes is amended by  
12 adding a new section to read:

13       "**§ 115C-242.1. Installation and operation of automated school bus safety camera.**

14       (a) Definition. – An "automated school bus safety camera" is a device that is affixed to a  
15 school bus, as that term is used in G.S. 20-217, that is synchronized to automatically record  
16 photographs or video of a vehicle at the time the vehicle is detected for a violation of (i)  
17 G.S. 20-217 or (ii) an ordinance adopted under G.S. 153A-246.

18       (b) Installation and Operation. – Automated school bus safety cameras may be installed  
19 and operated on any school bus operated by a local board of education within a county that has  
20 adopted an ordinance under G.S. 153A-246 as follows:

- 21           (1) A local board of education may install and operate automated school bus safety  
22           cameras without contracting with a private vendor.  
23           (2) A local board of education may enter into a service contract to install and  
24           operate automated school bus safety cameras with a private vendor. Contracts  
25           shall be let in accordance with the provisions of G.S. 143-129 applicable to  
26           purchases of apparatus, supplies, materials, or equipment. The maximum length  
27           of any contract entered into under this subdivision shall be three years. A  
28           contract entered into under this subdivision may contain an option to renew or  
29           extend the contract for only one additional term not to exceed three years.  
30           (3) Upon request by one or more local boards of education, the State Board of  
31           Education shall enter into a contract for a statewide service or contracts for  
32           regional services to install and operate automated school bus safety cameras  
33           with a private vendor. These contracts shall be let in accordance with the  
34           provisions of Article 3 of Chapter 143 of the General Statutes.

35       (c) Interlocal Agreements. – Any local board of education, board of county  
36 commissioners, and law enforcement agency may enter into an interlocal agreement pursuant to  
37 Part 1 of Article 20 of Chapter 160A of the General Statutes that is necessary and proper to  
38 effectuate the purpose and intent of this section and G.S. 153A-246. Any agreement entered into  
39 pursuant to this subsection may include provisions on cost-sharing and reimbursement to which  
40 the local board of education, board of county commissioners, or law enforcement agency freely  
41 and voluntarily agree for the purposes of effectuating this section and G.S. 153A-246.

42       (d) Evidence in Criminal Proceeding. – Any photographs or videos recorded by an  
43 automated school bus safety camera that capture a violation of G.S. 20-217 shall also be provided  
44 to the investigating law enforcement agency for use as evidence in any proceeding alleging a  
45 violation of G.S. 20-217."

46       **SECTION 3.** G.S. 20-54 reads as rewritten:

47       "**§ 20-54. Authority for refusing registration or certificate of title.**

48       The Division shall refuse registration or issuance of a certificate of title or any transfer of  
49 registration upon any of the following grounds:

50       ...

1 (11) The Division has been notified (i) pursuant to G.S. 20-217(g2) that the owner of  
2 the vehicle has failed to pay any fine imposed pursuant to  
3 ~~G.S. 20-217~~ G.S. 20-217 or (ii) pursuant to G.S. 153A-246(b)(14) that the  
4 owner of the vehicle has failed to pay a civil penalty due under G.S. 153A-246.

5 ...."

6 **SECTION 4.** G.S. 20-217 reads as rewritten:

7 "**§ 20-217. Motor vehicles to stop for properly marked and designated school buses in**  
8 **certain instances; evidence of identity of driver.**

9 ...

10 (h) ~~Automated camera and video recording systems~~ Automated school bus safety cameras,  
11 as defined in G.S. 115C-242.1, may be used to detect and prosecute violations of this section. Any  
12 photograph or video recorded by ~~a camera or video recording system~~ an automated school bus  
13 safety camera shall, if consistent with the North Carolina Rules of Evidence, be admissible as  
14 evidence in any proceeding alleging a violation of subsection (a) of this section. Failure to produce  
15 a photograph or video recorded by an automated school bus safety camera shall not preclude  
16 prosecution under this section."

17 **SECTION 5.** A county that adopts an ordinance as provided in G.S. 153A-246, as  
18 enacted by this act, shall maintain records of all violations of that ordinance for which a civil  
19 penalty is assessed. Upon request, the county shall provide at least five years of those records to  
20 the North Carolina Child Fatality Task Force and the North Carolina General Assembly.

21 **SECTION 6.** Within 90 days of the enactment of this act, the State Board of  
22 Education shall develop a model request for proposals and a model contract that may be used by  
23 the local boards of education in letting contracts in accordance with the provisions of  
24 G.S. 115C-242.1(b)(2), as enacted by Section 2 of this act. The State Board of Education and the  
25 Department of Public Instruction shall provide technical assistance to a local board of education  
26 on this process upon a request by the local board.

27 **SECTION 7.** Section 3 of this act is effective one year after it becomes law and shall  
28 apply to the registration of any motor vehicle whose owner's failure to pay a civil penalty due  
29 under G.S. 153A-246 is reported by a county to the Division of Motor Vehicles on or after the  
30 effective date of this act. The remainder of this act is effective when it becomes law. The  
31 requirements in G.S. 115C-242.1(b)(2), as enacted by Section 2 of this act, shall not apply to a  
32 local board of education that, prior to the effective date of this act, entered into a contract with a  
33 private vendor to install and operate automated school bus safety cameras.