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## ACLU OF RI POSITION: OPPOSE

### TESTIMONY ON 26-H 8523, RELATING TO MOTOR AND OTHER VEHICLES – SPECIAL STOPS REQUIRED May 14, 2026

The ACLU of Rhode Island opposes this legislation, which would make significant changes to the law governing the operation of school bus cameras. We have previously registered our opposition to expansion of automated traffic enforcement systems, including the use of cameras within the school bus context. This bill only further highlights the troubling “mission creep” in the use of technology for law enforcement purposes and the ways such technology prompts questionable shortcuts in the effort to hold people liable. We briefly cite below some of the many concerns we have about this bill:

\* From the time that school bus camera monitoring system legislation was first introduced, we raised concerns about language that would allow this surveillance system to be inappropriately expanded in privacy-infringing ways. Specifically, we urged the deletion of the phrase “at a minimum” [which can be found on Page 8, line 12 of this bill], language that would authorize school bus surveillance cameras to be used in ways beyond capturing vehicles that drive past stopped buses. That concern has come to pass with the addition of language on Page 9, lines 11-13, which will now authorize use of the cameras to also cite drivers for traveling behind a school bus at a distance of less than 50 feet. School districts should not be purchasing camera technology that does anything more than capture vehicles passing stopped school buses, or else use of this technology will almost inevitably continue to be expanded well beyond its initial stated goals.

\* The bill would expand from 10 to 30 days the amount of time to notify a person of a violation, vastly reducing the deterrent effect and the ability of the person to prepare any defenses to the violation. [Page 10, line 6]

\* The bill would take the disconcerting step of allowing *non-law enforcement employees* – so-called “technicians” – to determine that there is probable cause that an offense has been committed and to issue citations to motor vehicle operators. [See, e.g., Page 9, lines 19-24] This sets a very disturbing precedent. Even more troubling, the bill eliminates the requirement that the person certifying the violation do so under penalty of perjury. [See, e.g., Page 11, lines 1-3]. At the same time, it *adds* a perjury notice requirement to motor vehicle operators who are contesting a citation. [Page 13, lines 11-13]

\* The bill would allow hearings for individuals contesting a citation to be held in person, online, or by mail. [Page 12, lines 16-18] As worded, it would appear to be up to the municipality,

not the individual to make that determination as to how the hearing would be held. As a result, an individual would not have the right to demand an in-person hearing, but instead could be limited to merely being allowed to submit a defense in writing.

\* The bill would increase the percentage of the fine that would go to the vendor from 30% to 40%, only highlighting the money-making nature of this technology for private enterprise.

\* The bill would substantially expand from twenty-four hours to a sweeping 90 days the amount of time that images generated by these cameras would be kept *when no violation of the law was identified*. [Page 14, lines 19-21] This legislation contains no meaningful explanation for why the retention period should be extended by three months, but instead raises deeply concerning privacy issues. There are no safeguards governing who may access these recordings, how long they may remain available online, whether they may be downloaded or shared, or what security standards would apply to the storage of this information.

In sum, this legislation only confirms for us the many privacy concerns we have raised over the years over these technological efforts to enforce traffic laws. For all the reasons expressed above, we urge the committee to reject this bill.

Thank you for considering our views.