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May 12, 2026

The Honorable Carol Hagan McEntee  
Chairwoman, House Judiciary Committee  
Rhode Island House of Representatives  
State House  
Providence, RI 02903

Support for 8523 – Relating to Motor and Other Vehicles – Special Stops Required

Dear Chairwoman McEntee and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Rhode Island Police Chiefs Association, I write in support of H. 8523, legislation relating to school bus safety enforcement and violations for failure to stop for a school bus.

Protecting children as they enter and exit school buses must remain a top public safety priority. School bus stop violations create extremely dangerous situations that place students, families, school personnel, and motorists at risk. Despite existing laws, drivers continue to illegally pass stopped school buses, often within feet of children crossing roadways.

This legislation modernizes Rhode Island's school bus safety enforcement framework by expanding the use of digital video school bus violation detection monitoring systems and streamlining the civil enforcement process for violations captured on video. The proposal provides municipalities and school departments with practical tools to improve compliance with school bus stopping laws and enhance accountability for dangerous driving behavior.

Importantly, the bill maintains procedural protections by allowing individuals to contest violations through a hearing process while also establishing clear evidentiary standards for violations captured through approved digital monitoring systems. The legislation also improves administrative efficiency by allowing violations to be handled civilly without requiring unnecessary court appearances in uncontested cases.

Automated school bus safety enforcement systems have proven effective in other jurisdictions in deterring dangerous driving behavior around school buses and increasing awareness of school bus stop laws. This legislation supports those efforts while helping to better protect Rhode Island students during daily transportation to and from school.

For these reasons, the Rhode Island Police Chiefs Association respectfully urges the Committee to support H. 8523.

Chief Sidney Wordell (ret.)  
Executive Director  
Rhode Island Police Chiefs Association