

# **WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE**

## **2022 REGULAR SESSION**

**Introduced**

### **House Bill 4520**

BY DELEGATES TONEY, FAST, DEAN, PAYNTER, STEELE,  
BATES, MCGEEHAN, ELLINGTON, AND STATLER

[Introduced February 02, 2022; Referred to the  
Committee on Technology and Infrastructure then the  
Judiciary]

1 A BILL to amend and reenact §17C-12-7 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating  
2 to providing that when a registered owner or lessee of a motor vehicle that is involved in  
3 the overtaking and passing of a stopped school bus is charged for a violation and  
4 misdemeanor offense, the state is not relieved of its burden of proof.

*Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:*

## **ARTICLE 12. SPECIAL STOPS REQUIRED.**

### **§17C-12-7. Overtaking and passing school bus; penalties; signs and warning lights upon buses; requirements for sale of buses; mounting of cameras; educational information campaign; limitation on idling.**

1 (a) The driver of a vehicle, upon meeting or overtaking from either direction any school  
2 bus which has stopped for the purpose of receiving or discharging any school children, shall stop  
3 the vehicle before reaching the school bus when there is in operation on the school bus flashing  
4 warning signal lights, as referred to in §17C-12-8 of this code, and the driver may not proceed  
5 until the school bus resumes motion, or is signaled by the school bus driver to proceed or the  
6 visual signals are no longer actuated. This section applies wherever the school bus is receiving  
7 or discharging children including, but not limited to, any street, highway, parking lot, private road,  
8 or driveway: *Provided*, That the driver of a vehicle upon a controlled access highway need not  
9 stop upon meeting or passing a school bus which is on a different roadway or adjacent to the  
10 highway and where pedestrians are not permitted to cross the roadway.

11 (b) Any driver acting in violation of subsection (a) of this section is guilty of a misdemeanor  
12 and, upon conviction for a first offense, shall be fined not less than \$500 or more than \$1,000, or  
13 confined in jail not more than six months, or both fined and confined. Upon conviction of a second  
14 violation of subsection (a) of this section, the driver shall be fined not less than \$1,000 nor more  
15 than \$1,500, or confined in jail not more than six months, or both fined and confined. Upon  
16 conviction of a third or subsequent violation of subsection (a) of this section, the driver shall be  
17 fined \$2,000 and confined not less than 48 hours in jail but not more than six months.

18 (c) Where the actual identity of the operator of a motor vehicle operated in violation of  
19 subsection (a) of this section is unknown but the license plate number of the motor vehicle is  
20 known, it may be inferred that the operator was an owner or lessee of the motor vehicle for  
21 purposes of the probable cause determination. Where there is more than one registered owner  
22 or lessee, the inference created by this subsection shall apply to the first listed owner or lessee  
23 as found on the motor vehicle registration: *Provided*, That a person charged with a violation of  
24 subsection (a) of this section, under the provisions of this subsection, where the sole evidence  
25 against the owner or lessee is the presence of the vehicle at the scene at the time of the offense  
26 shall only be subject to the applicable fine set forth in subsection (b) of this section upon  
27 conviction: *Provided, however*, That the offenses set forth in subsections (f) and (g) of this section  
28 are separate and distinct from that set forth in subsection (a) of this section.

29 (d) Notwithstanding any provision of this section to the contrary, a prosecution of a charge  
30 under subsection (c) of this section that may be brought against any registered owner or lessee  
31 of the vehicle.

32 ~~(d)~~ (e) Service of process of a complaint issued pursuant to subsection (c) of this section  
33 shall be effected consistent with West Virginia Rule of Criminal Procedure 4.

34 ~~(e)~~ (f) In addition to the penalties prescribed in subsection (b) of this section, the  
35 Commissioner of Motor Vehicles shall, upon conviction, suspend the driver's license of the person  
36 so convicted:

37 (1) Of a first offense under subsection (b) of this section, for a period of 60 days;

38 (2) Of a second offense under subsection (b) of this section, for a period of 180 days; or

39 (3) Of a third or subsequent offense under subsection (b) of this section, for a period of  
40 one year.

41 ~~(f)~~ (g) Any driver of a vehicle who willfully violates the provisions of subsection (a) of this  
42 section and the violation causes serious bodily injury to any person other than the driver, is guilty  
43 of a felony and, upon conviction, shall be confined in a state correctional facility not less than one

44 year nor more than three years and fined not less than \$2,000 nor more than \$5,000.

45 ~~(g)~~ (h) Any driver of a vehicle who willfully violates the provisions of subsection (a) of this  
46 section, and the violation causes death, is guilty of a felony and, upon conviction, shall be confined  
47 in a state correctional facility not less than one year nor more than 10 years and fined not less  
48 than \$5,000 nor more than \$10,000.

49 ~~(h)~~ (i) Every bus used for the transportation of school children shall bear upon the front  
50 and rear of the bus a plainly visible sign containing the words "school bus" in letters not less than  
51 eight inches in height. When a contract school bus is being operated upon a highway for purposes  
52 other than the actual transportation of children either to or from school, all markings on the  
53 contract school bus indicating "school bus" shall be covered or concealed. Any school bus sold  
54 or transferred to another owner by a county board of education, agency or individual shall have  
55 all flashing warning lights disconnected and all lettering removed or permanently obscured, except  
56 when sold or transferred for the transportation of school children: *Provided*, That every county  
57 board of education shall install forward-facing and rear-facing cameras on all school buses  
58 purchased on or after July 1, 2019, for the purpose of enforcing this section and for any other  
59 lawful purpose.

60 ~~(i)~~ (j) To the extent that state, federal, or other funds are available, the State Police shall  
61 conduct an information campaign to educate drivers concerning the provisions of this section and  
62 the importance of school bus safety.

63 ~~(j)~~ (k) The State Board of Education shall promulgate a rule in accordance with the  
64 provisions of §29A-3B-1 *et seq.* of this code governing the idling of school buses.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to provide that when a registered owner or lessee, of a motor vehicle that vehicle is involved in the overtaking and passing a stopped school, is charged for a violation and misdemeanor offense, the state is not relieved of its burden of proof.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.