



School Zone Cameras and Speed Enforcement Laws

Executive Summary

This **CSG South Research Memo** provides an overview of state laws authorizing the use of automated cameras to enforce traffic laws in school zones and to penalize the illegal passing of stopped school buses. With student safety as a paramount concern, many states have turned to technology to supplement traditional law enforcement efforts. These automated systems are designed to deter dangerous driving behaviors, such as speeding in school zones and ignoring school bus stop arms, which are significant threats to student pedestrians.

This document outlines the common legislative frameworks states have enacted, including the types of violations targeted, the structure of penalties, the allocation of revenue generated from fines, and the evidentiary standards for camera-based citations. By examining various state approaches, this memo offers a comparative perspective on the policies and practices implemented across the country to enhance student safety as they travel to and from school.

Research Methods

Review of enacted state statutes, reports from the Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA), and the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS), and is focused on identifying states with specific legislation authorizing automated enforcement for either school zone speed violations or school bus stop-arm violations, and detailing the key components of those laws.

Findings and Analysis

State	Summary	Citation(s)
Alabama	Authorizes a pilot program for automated speed enforcement in school zones in Montgomery.	Act 2022-386
Arkansas	Allows for camera enforcement of illegal passing of stopped school buses.	Act 1147 of 2013
Georgia	Permits automated cameras on school buses to enforce stop-arm violations; establishes civil penalties.	O.C.G.A. § 40-6-163
Illinois	Permits automated speed enforcement systems in school zones within certain municipalities.	625 ILCS 5/11-605.1
Maryland	Establishes a framework for the use of speed cameras in school zones and work zones.	Md. Code, Transp. § 21-809
New York	Authorizes New York City's school zone speed camera program.	VTL § 1180-b
North Carolina	Authorizes civil penalties for school bus stop-arm violations captured by camera.	N.C. Gen. Stat. § 20-217
Virginia	Authorizes local school divisions to operate school bus camera programs and issue civil penalties.	Va. Code Ann. § 46.2-844

School Bus Stop-Arm Camera Laws

More than half of the states have passed laws specifically permitting cameras on school buses to capture images of vehicles that illegally pass when the bus is stopped, and its stop arm is extended.

- **Georgia:** State law explicitly allows for using automated school bus cameras to enforce stop-arm violations. A civil monetary penalty is issued to the vehicle's owner, with the fine for a first offense set at \$250, increasing to



\$750 for a second offense, and \$1,000 for each subsequent offense within a five-year period. Revenue generated from these fines is directed toward covering the cost of the camera systems and other local school safety initiatives.

- **Virginia:** State code authorizes local school divisions to install and operate video-monitoring systems on school buses. A violation results in a civil penalty of \$250 against the vehicle's owner. The program is administered at the local level, allowing communities to tailor implementation to their specific needs.
- **Arkansas:** In 2023, the state updated its laws to increase the fines for illegally passing a stopped school bus, with penalties ranging from \$500 to \$2,500, to further deter dangerous driving around school buses and improve student safety during loading and unloading. The state has allowed camera enforcement for this violation for several years.
- **North Carolina:** State law allows for civil penalties to be assessed against the vehicle's owner captured by a school bus camera while illegally passing a stopped bus. The violation carries a significant fine, and the recorded evidence is admissible in court proceedings.

School Zone Speed Camera Laws

A smaller but growing number of states have enacted laws authorizing the use of automated speed enforcement cameras in designated school zones.

- **New York:** The state has implemented a comprehensive school zone speed camera program under state authorization, which was made permanent in 2022. Cameras operate during school hours (6 AM to 10 PM on weekdays) and are placed in designated speed zones around schools. The program has been credited with a significant reduction in speeding and traffic-related injuries in those areas.
- **Illinois:** State law permits certain municipalities to use automated speed enforcement systems in school zones. The law dictates the permissible hours of camera operation and the procedures for issuing citations.
- **Alabama:** A 2023 law in Alabama authorizes municipalities to use automated traffic control systems in school zones. The program is designed to be self-funding, with citation revenues covering operational costs.
- **Maryland:** Maryland has one of the oldest statewide frameworks for speed cameras, including in school zones. State law limits the fines that can be issued and requires that revenue be used for public safety purposes.