



Senate Fiscal Agency  
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## BILL ANALYSIS



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House Bill 4054 (Substitute H-1 as passed by the House)  
Sponsor: Representative Holly Hughes  
House Committee: Transportation and Infrastructure  
Senate Committee: Transportation

Date Completed: 10-18-17

**CONTENT**

**The bill would amend the Pupil Transportation Act to allow a school bus to be equipped with flashing advisory signs on the rear and front of the bus; establish specifications of the signs; and prescribe the warning messages that they would have to display.**

Specifically, the bill would add Section 12 to allow a school bus to be equipped with a flashing advisory sign for the purpose of warning the operators of other vehicles of the presence of a traffic hazard requiring the use of unusual care in approaching, overtaking, or passing.

A flashing advisory sign would have to be mounted on the rear of the school bus in an area that did not interfere with compliance with the requirements of Section 19 or 33 of the Act. The sign would have to be sealed and weathertight, be 23.5 by 8.75 by 1.5 inches in size, and be connected to the school bus safety lights.

(Section 19 requires a school bus to be equipped with mounted red and amber signal lights, and specifies the location and wiring system for those lights, including requirements regarding the paint surrounding the area of the lights. Section 33 contains the paint requirements for school buses.)

The bill would require the sign to display warning messages to motorists. Specifically, the sign would have to do the following:

- In amber letters, alternately flash the word messages "caution" and "stopping" when the amber school bus safety lights were activated.
- In red letters, flash the word message "stop" or "do not pass" when the red school bus safety lights were activated.
- In amber letters, flash the word message "caution" or "caution stopping" when the hazard lights were activated.
- In amber letters, flash the word message "caution" when back-up lights were activated.

The letters in these word messages would have to be at least 1.5 inches tall. The word message could be controlled by the hazard lights or school bus safety light flashers.

The sign would have to have a minimum viewing angle of 15 degrees on each side of the perpendicular axis, and the word messages would have to be clearly visible in direct sunlight from a distance of 500 feet along the axis of the school bus. Regardless of the type of lighting used for illumination, each warning message displayed by the sign would have to include a

complete light quality arrangement to fully and clearly convey the intended warning message to approaching motorists.

In addition, an electronic sign that displayed warning messages to motorists could be placed on the front of a school bus if all of the following were satisfied:

- A flashing advisory sign had been mounted on the rear of the school bus.
- The sign was wired only to the amber and red school bus safety lights.
- The sign was mounted below the windshield, was vertically centered, and did not create a vision obstruction for the driver of the school bus.

A sign on the rear or the front of a school bus would have to be uniform in design and in operation, and each sign placed on a school bus as provided under the bill would have to display the same advisory warnings. The sign would have to automatically energize when the school bus's hazard lights were activated, comply with Section 19(3), and automatically de-energize when the school bus service door was closed. The sign would have to be properly maintained and operated as designed by the manufacturer.

(Under Section 19(3), in addition to the four red lights required and described in Section 19(2), four amber lights must be installed near each red signal light. The system of red and amber signal lights must be wired so that the amber lights are energized manually, and the red lights are automatically energized, with the amber lights being automatically de-energized, when the bus service door is opened.)

In addition, the bill specifies that Section 12 could be referred to as the "Privacy Law".

Proposed MCL 257.1812

Legislative Analyst: Drew Krogulecki

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

The bill would have no fiscal impact on the State, with optional costs to school districts and intermediate districts that operate school buses and chose to upgrade or purchase new school buses with enhanced advisory signs. According to the Michigan Association for Pupil Transportation, the costs to add on or upgrade existing school buses with enhanced advisory signs range from \$250 to \$350 per bus, due to multiple vendors and economies of scale. This would be the additional costs for districts that chose to purchase or upgrade school buses with enhanced advisory signs. For school districts that have a contractor that provides busing services, those contracts could increase in cost if the districts opted for enhanced advisory signs. There are 15,833 publicly owned, privately owned, and contractor-owned school buses throughout the State, based on the number of school bus inspections made by the Michigan Department of State Police in fiscal year 2015-16. If every district and contractor were to upgrade school buses, the total costs across the State would equal \$5.5 million or \$4.17 per pupil on average.

Fiscal Analyst: Cory Savino

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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.