

CHAPTER 253
2025 -- H 5421 SUBSTITUTE A AS AMENDED
Enacted 06/26/2025

A N A C T
RELATING TO MOTOR AND OTHER VEHICLES -- SCHOOL BUS SAFETY ENFORCEMENT

Introduced By: Representatives Noret, Read, Messier, Casimiro, Serpa, O'Brien, Corvese, Craven, Biah, and Finkelman

Date Introduced: February 12, 2025

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

SECTION 1. Sections 31-51-2, 31-51-3, and 31-51-5.1 of the General Laws in Chapter 31-51 entitled "School Bus Safety Enforcement" are hereby amended to read as follows:

31-51-2. Live digital video school bus violation detection monitoring systems.

(a) All school departments of this state are hereby authorized to install and operate live digital video school bus violation detection monitoring systems. Such systems shall, at a minimum, be systems which monitor and detect school bus traffic violations. For purposes of this chapter a live digital video school bus violation detection monitoring system means a system with one or more camera sensors and computers which produce live digital and recorded video of motor vehicles being operated in violation of school bus traffic laws in violation of § 31-20-12. All systems installed for used use under this chapter must shall, at a minimum, produce a live visual image viewable remotely, a recorded image of the license plate, and be able to record the time, date, and location of the vehicle, and a signed affidavit by a person who witnessed the violation via live video.

(b) On and after July 1, 2027, all new school buses to be operated pursuant to § 31-20-11(a) shall be equipped with a live digital video school bus violation detection monitoring system that conforms with the requirements of subsection (a) of this section.

(c) On and after July 1, 2032, all school buses to be operated pursuant to § 31-20-11(a) shall be equipped with a live digital video school bus violation detection monitoring system that conforms with the requirements of subsection (a) of this section.

(d) The school departments with input and approval by the municipal police chief may enter into an agreement with a private corporation or other entity to provide live digital video school bus violation detection monitoring systems and to maintain and operate such systems.

31-51-3. Procedure — Notice.

(a) Except as expressly provided in this chapter, all prosecutions based on evidence produced by a live digital video school bus violation detection monitoring system shall follow the procedures established in chapter 41.1 of this title, chapter 18 of title 8, and the rules promulgated by the chief magistrate of the traffic tribunal for the hearing of civil traffic violations in the traffic tribunal. Provided, that in an action brought pursuant to the provisions of this chapter, references in chapter 41.1 of this title to an "operator" shall apply to the registered owner of the vehicle. A summons may be issued by an officer solely based on evidence obtained by use of a live digital video school bus violation detection monitoring system. All summonses issued based on evidence obtained from a live digital video school bus violation detection monitoring system shall be issued within ten (10) days of the violation. Notwithstanding any provisions of the general laws to the contrary, exclusive jurisdiction to hear and decide any violation under this chapter shall be with the traffic tribunal as follows:

(1) By the traffic tribunal over all violations for which the summons is issued by a state agency;

(2) By the traffic tribunal over all violations for which the summons is issued by a city or town which has not established a municipal court; and

(3) By the municipal court over all violations for which the summons is issued by a city or town which has established a municipal court.

(b) It shall be sufficient to commence a prosecution based on evidence obtained from a live digital video school bus violation detection monitoring system. A copy of the summons and supporting documentation shall be mailed to the address of the registered owner kept on file by the registry of motor vehicles. For purposes of this section, the date of issuance shall be the date of mailing.

(c) The officer issuing the citation shall certify under penalties of perjury that the evidence obtained from the live digital video school bus violation detection monitoring system was sufficient to demonstrate a violation of the motor vehicle code. Such certification shall be sufficient in all prosecutions pursuant to this chapter to justify the entry of a default judgment upon sufficient proof of actual notice in all cases where the citation is not answered within the time period permitted.

(d) The summons shall contain all the information provided for on the uniform summons as referred to in § 31-41.1-1 and the rules of procedure promulgated by the chief magistrate of the traffic tribunal as well as the date, time, and location of the violation. In addition, the following information shall be attached to or accompany the summons:

(1) Copies of two (2) or more photographs, or microphotographs, videos, or other recorded images taken as proof of the violation;

(2) A signed statement certified under the penalties of perjury by a trained law enforcement officer that, based on inspection of recorded images and video, the motor vehicle was being operated in violation of this chapter;

(3) A signed statement that recorded images are evidence of a violation of this chapter;

(4) A statement that the person who receives the summons under this chapter may either pay the civil fine in accordance with the provisions of § 31-51-2.2, proceed under § 31-51-5(c)(3) of this section, or elect to stand trial for the alleged violation;

(5) A signed affidavit by a person who witnessed the motor vehicle being operated in violation of this chapter; and

(6) A signed statement certified under the penalties of perjury by a trained law enforcement officer that the summons and attachments required under this subsection were mailed to the address of the registered owner kept on file by the registry of motor vehicles.

(e) Any summons issued pursuant to this chapter shall be issued by a law enforcement officer authorized to issue a traffic violation summons pursuant to this title.

31-51-5.1. Revenue.

The revenue generated from each fine imposed pursuant to this chapter shall be allocated as follows:

(1) Seventy-five percent (75%) to the vendor;

(2) Twelve and one-half percent (12.5%) Forty percent (40%) to the state general fund; and

(3) Twelve and one-half percent (12.5%) to the

(2)(i) Thirty percent (30%) to the municipality where the violation takes place; and

(ii) Thirty percent (30%) to the vendor who supplies and supports the video detection monitoring system being used; and

(3) The provisions of this section shall not apply to contracts existing at the time of the enactment of this section, and shall only apply to new contracts, or extensions of existing contracts, entered into on or after the effective date of this section.

SECTION 2. Section 8-18-3 of the General Laws in Chapter 8-18 entitled "State and Municipal Court Compact" is hereby amended to read as follows:

8-18-3. Jurisdiction for certain violations. [Effective until January 15, 2027.]

(a) Subject to subsection (b) of this section, jurisdiction over the adjudication of matters relating to violations enumerated in the following sections of the general laws is hereby conferred upon the municipal courts and the traffic tribunal:

31-13-4 31-13-9 31-13-11 31-14-3 31-14-9 31-15-1 31-15-3
 31-15-4 31-15-5 31-15-6 31-15-7 31-15-9 31-15-11 31-15-12
 31-15-13 31-16-1 31-16-2 31-16-4 31-16-5 31-16-7 31-16-9
 31-17-1 31-17-2 31-17-4 31-17-6 31-17-7 31-18-12 31-20-1
 31-20-2 31-20-9 31-21-4 31-22-2 31-22-4 31-22-5 31-22-6
 31-22-7 31-22-8 31-22-9 31-23-1 31-23-8 31-23-13 31-23-14
 31-23-15 31-24-1 31-24-4 31-24-5 31-24-7 31-24-12 31-38-4
 31-12-12 37-15-7 31-3-29 31-3-30 31-3-34 31-3-35 31-8-1
 31-10-32 31-10.1-1 31-10.1-4 31-10.1-5 31-10.1-6 31-13-6 31-15-8
 31-23-45 31-14-1 31-17-3 31-23-4 31-23-10 31-23-17 31-23-19
 31-23-20 31-23-26 31-23-27 31-23-40 31-23-42.1 31-3-18 31-10-27
 31-18-3 31-10.1-7 31-38-3 31-14-12 31-17-5 31-25-9 31-25-11
 31-25-12 31-25-12.1 31-25-10 31-22-1 31-24-34 31-27-9 31-3-9
 31-15-10 31-18-8 31-25-17 31-10.1-4 31-23-43 31-23-29 31-24-45
 31-17-8 31-24-10 31-23-47 31-12-9 31-15-16 24-10-18 31-19-5
 31-3-12 31-24-9 31-22-22 31-28-7 31-28-7.1 31-3-32 31-18-4
 24-10-18 31-18-5 31-18-15 31-18-18 31-21-14 31-22-3 31-23-16
 31-24-6 31-24-8 31-24-31 31-27-16 31-22-23 31-10-30 31-10-10
 31-19-3 31-3-40 31-22-24 31-23-51 31-7-1 31-15-2 31-15-12.1
 31-16-8 31-20-17 31-24-16 31-24-17 31-24-20 31-24-22 31-24-23
 31-24-24 31-24-25 31-24-26 31-24-27 31-24-28 31-24-29 31-24-30
 31-24-32 31-24-33 31-24-36 31-24-38 31-24-39 31-24-40 31-24-41
 31-24-42 31-24-43 31-24-46 31-24-49 31-24-51 31-24-53 31-26-3.1
 31-27-17 31-27-19 31-33-2 31-45-1 4-1-26 31-10.1-2 31-20-10
 31-22-13 31-24-13 31-27-10 31-41.1-4 31.41.2-3 Chapter 31-51

(Speeding (A)).

(b) Except as provided in §§ 8-18-9, 8-18-10, and 31-41.1-11 jurisdiction over violations enumerated in subsection (a) shall be exercised as follows:

- (1) By the traffic tribunal over all violations for which the summons is issued by a state agency;
- (2) By the traffic tribunal over all violations for which the summons is issued by a city or town which has not established a municipal court; and
- (3) By the municipal court over all violations for which the summons is issued by a city or town which has established a municipal court.

8-18-3. Jurisdiction for certain violations. [Effective January 15, 2027.]

(a) Subject to subsection (b) of this section, jurisdiction over the adjudication of matters relating to violations enumerated in the following sections of the general laws is hereby conferred upon the municipal courts and the traffic tribunal:

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 31-17-1 31-17-2 31-17-4 31-17-6 31-17-7 31-18-12 31-20-1
 31-20-2 31-20-9 31-21-4 31-22-2 31-22-4 31-22-5 31-22-6
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 31-23-15 31-24-1 31-24-4 31-24-5 31-24-7 31-24-12 31-38-4
 31-12-12 37-15-7 31-3-29 31-3-30 31-3-34 31-3-35 31-8-1

31-10-32 31-10.1-1 31-10.1-4 31-10.1-5 31-10.1-6 31-13-6 31-15-8
31-23-45 31-14-1 31-17-3 31-23-4 31-23-10 31-23-17 31-23-19
31-23-20 31-23-26 31-23-27 31-23-40 31-23-42.1 31-3-18 31-10-27
31-18-3 31-10.1-7 31-38-3 31-14-12 31-17-5 31-25-9 31-25-11
31-25-12 31-25-12.1 31-25-10 31-22-1 31-24-34 31-27-9 31-3-9
31-15-10 31-18-8 31-25-17 31-10.1-4 31-23-43 31-23-29 31-24-45
31-17-8 31-24-10 31-23-47 31-12-9 31-15-16 24-10-18 31-19-5
31-3-12 31-24-9 31-22-22 31-28-7 31-28-7.1 31-3-32 31-18-4
24-10-18 31-18-5 31-18-15 31-18-18 31-21-14 31-22-3 31-23-16
31-24-6 31-24-8 31-24-31 31-27-16 31-22-23 31-10-30 31-10-10
31-19-3 31-3-40 31-22-24 31-23-51 31-7-1 31-15-2 31-15-12.1
31-16-8 31-20-17 31-24-16 31-24-17 31-24-20 31-24-22 31-24-23
31-24-24 31-24-25 31-24-26 31-24-27 31-24-28 31-24-29 31-24-30
31-24-32 31-24-33 31-24-36 31-24-38 31-24-39 31-24-40 31-24-41
31-24-42 31-24-43 31-24-46 31-24-49 31-24-51 31-24-53 31-26-3.1
31-27-17 31-27-19 31-33-2 31-45-1 4-1-26 31-10.1-2 31-20-10
31-22-13 31-24-13 31-27-10 31-41.1-4 Chapter 31-51

(Speeding (A)).

(b) Except as provided in §§ 8-18-9, 8-18-10, and 31-41.1-11 jurisdiction over violations enumerated in subsection (a) shall be exercised as follows:

(1) By the traffic tribunal over all violations for which the summons is issued by a state agency;

(2) By the traffic tribunal over all violations for which the summons is issued by a city or town which has not established a municipal court; and

(3) By the municipal court over all violations for which the summons is issued by a city or town which has established a municipal court.

Compiler's Notes.

Section 31-10.1-2, referred to in the table in subsection (a) of this section, is repealed by P.L. 2024, ch. 41, § 3 and P.L. 2024, ch. 42, § 3, effective August 31, 2024.

SECTION 3. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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LC001463/SUB A

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TOWN OF BRISTOL, RHODE ISLAND

A RESOLUTION REQUESTING ACTION BY THE BRISTOL-WARREN REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT REGARDING RECENT SCHOOL BUS SAFETY LEGISLATION

WHEREAS, on June 26, 2025, legislation affecting school bus safety was enacted by the Rhode Island General Assembly; and

WHEREAS, the legislation, known as P.L. 2025, chapters 253 & 254, provides that effective July 1, 2027, all new school buses shall be equipped with a live digital video school bus violation detection monitoring system; and

WHEREAS, the legislation further provides that effective July 1, 2032, all school buses (not only new buses) shall be equipped with such systems; and

WHEREAS, the legislation empowers school districts to enter into agreements with private entities for the provision, maintenance, and operation of such systems, but input and approval by the municipal police chief is required; and

WHEREAS, the Bristol Town Council wishes to partner with the Bristol-Warren Regional School District to prepare for these upcoming deadlines, and to ensure the safety of students, bus drivers, and bus monitors, as well as the safety of the general public;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

1. The Bristol Town Council hereby respectfully urges the Bristol-Warren Regional School Committee to review the recently enacted legislation affecting school bus safety enforcement, a copy of which is attached hereto, and consider issuing a request for proposals for vendors that can ensure compliance with these upcoming mandates.
2. The Town Clerk is directed to send a copy of this resolution to the members of the Bristol-Warren Regional School Committee and to the Superintendent of the Bristol-Warren Regional School District.

ATTEST:

Melissa Cordeiro
Town Clerk

Nathan T. Calouro, Chairman
Bristol Town Council