

Hello, my name is Cassie Orloske. I am a resident of Fargo, the parent of two high school students in the West Fargo School District, the aunt of two elementary students in another North Dakota school district and a licensed foster parent. I am writing to express my support for House Bill 1294, relating to offenses excepted from the traffic violation procedure, amount of fees, moving violations, and overtaking and passing a school bus.

Distracted drivers who ignore flashing red lights and stop signs on the control arm of the bus and overtake a bus, whether in a residential neighborhood, on a county road or highway, are engaging in irresponsible and negligent behavior that can have devastating consequences. The lives of North Dakota's children are worth infinitely more than the few minutes it takes to stop and allow children to safely enter or exit their school bus.

According to the AARP Driver Safety Smart Driver program, North Dakota is one of just nine states with a first-offense fine of \$100 or less. Our neighbors in South Dakota, Minnesota and Montana assess first-violation penalties including significantly higher monetary fines and fees, community service, and potential jail time. Increasing the penalties for this dangerous behavior is essential to protecting the safety and well-being of our children.

More than 400 children nationwide have been killed by drivers passing a stopped school bus over the past four decades, according to the Institute for Transportation Research and Education. By increasing the fine, we send a clear message to drivers in North Dakota that the safety of our children is a top priority.

Thank you for your consideration of this bill and commitment to the safety and well-being of our children!

Cassie J. Orloske