

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: Alice Lane [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, January 5, 2023 6:49:37 PM
To: Farag, Susan [REDACTED]
Subject: PAC Comment

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Once weekly I drive on Randolph Road from the intersection of Serpentine Rd & Randolph, Silver Spring, MD 20904, down Randolph Rd towards Rockville.

School buses travel on Randolph at all hours of the day and into the evening in this direction. One evening about a week b/f Christmas I was coming home from visiting a sick friend near this above intersection, traveling on Randolph Rd. I am a careful driver with *an excellent driving record*.

On this afternoon at about 4:20 PM it was pouring rain and getting dark. It had rained all day and been overcast. The rain was such that the windshield wipers were struggling to keep up with the downpour. I was driving in the far left lane on this three lane Highway.

All of the sudden out of the corner of my right eye I noticed yellow flashing lights to my right. Cars in the middle lane were passing me on my right. I looked to my right and all I could

see were yellow flashing lights. As you know no cars have windshield wipers on the side windows and when it rains car windows get fogged up.

I then looked in my rearview mirror and cars behind me were stopped. This is when it struck me that those yellow lights must have been a school bus.

My understanding is it is when the red lights flash and the pop-out side stop device on bus is invoked THAT is when a driver is required to stop.

I decided to look into what others have experienced with school bus stops and camera tickets. I found on Nextdoor there was a long discussion, over 103 posts, on this program, started by a driver who got a school bus ticket on River Road. He wrote in his post, " I did not see the stopped bus. And apparently a whole bunch of other people didn't see it either (according to the online video), and they will be receiving fines too."

Another person on this Nextdoor school bus ticket program discussion posted this in response to a prior post:

Funny you think a police officer and a camera are the same thing. Actually sad. No, it's not the same thing. A police officer could not legally ticket you for passing a school bus that was pulled off in a parking lot. But that is EXACTLY what these cameras are doing right now in Silver Spring. In fact, they will be doing it tomorrow morning. The ONLY appeal is in person, once a month on a pre-set day. **Good luck if you have to work. And NO these videos are NOT REVIEWED BY A POLICE OFFICER. That is 100% incorrect.** A staff person

maybe scans the images but since the Bus Patrol America is **allowed to send through 19% of videos that DO NOT SHOW VIOLATIONS (per the contract)** there are far too many videos for 2 people to review and so the review is cursory at best. Flooding the system with videos is the goal. That means more \$\$\$ for the guy in Louisiana that collects the fines. Finally, it's also funny that you think these cameras have anything to do with kids safety. That's a fun ad for these but not backed up by facts. The biggest danger to kids is from their own school buses and from **KNOWN DANDEROUS BUS STOP LOCATIONS**. MCPS has already lost a child to a bus accident, from her own bus. That bus had 14 of these cameras on it. Not one of those cameras saved her life. She was hit by her own school bus and died. **The County Council has documented the many, many dangerous MCPS school bus stop locations and the Board of Education has done nothing.** Don't use children as the basis for a money grab for a private company. To be fair, many, many companies use "education" to acquire education funding and rob students of resources. But shouldn't MCPS be better than that? Oh, let me add the Force Multiplier Solutions (shut down by FBI and renamed Bus Patrol America) "contract" with the Montgomery County Board of Education was a no bid/no RFP deal made after MCPS and police took a "trip" to Dallas, TX to meet with one of the former officers who is now in prison.

<https://parentscoalitionmc.blogspot.com/2019/07/how-did-mcps-school-buses-get-cameras.html>

Learning all of this about this program (and a whole

lot more I don't have time to share) has brought me to a place where I believe strongly **this program needs to end**. Everyone is for having kids be safe as they travel to/from school. But the answer is NOT to implement a outrageously flawed and poorly thought out program with so many flaws as to be despised by every driver who through no intent gets ensnarled into it and fined a whopping \$250, which is a consequential fee for a LOT of MD drivers.

It is my solid belief this school bus camera ticket program is severely flawed and is issuing tickets of no validity to drivers who once ensnarled in this program have an excessive, unacceptable uphill battle to seek justice for an 'error' that could never have been avoided and was entirely unintentional.

As a long time Montgomery county MD resident I see this program as a robbing of MD drivers of their earned income over an offense that came to fruition due to the numerous and significant flaws in this program. I want this program stopped as soon as possible. It is not appropriate or just and is making this contractor wealthy and punishing law abiding MD residents.

Submit comments or questions to the County's Policing Advisory Commission using the form below.

Alternatively, email Montgomery County Council staff for the Commission at susan.farag@montgomerycountymd.gov with the

subject line "PAC Comment" or send a letter to the following address:

Policing Advisory Commission
Council Office Building
100 Maryland Avenue, 6th Floor
Rockville, MD 20850

Comments submitted may be shared with all members of the Commission, including the Chief of Police (or their designee) and a representative from the police union. Please note that under the Maryland Public Information Act (MPIA), all comments received by the Commission are public and might be shared in response to an MPIA request.