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New Survey: Nearly Half of Children Riding the School Bus Have Had a Close Call with a Dangerous Driver

Nine in Ten Parents Also Support Automated Stop-Arm Camera Enforcement to Prevent Illegal School Bus Passings

WASHINGTON, D.C. – With millions of students across the country back in school, a new national survey from the Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA) finds that dangerous driving around schools and school buses is both common and deeply personal for American families. A clear consensus emerged: Parents overwhelmingly want stronger enforcement to better protect children traveling to and from school.

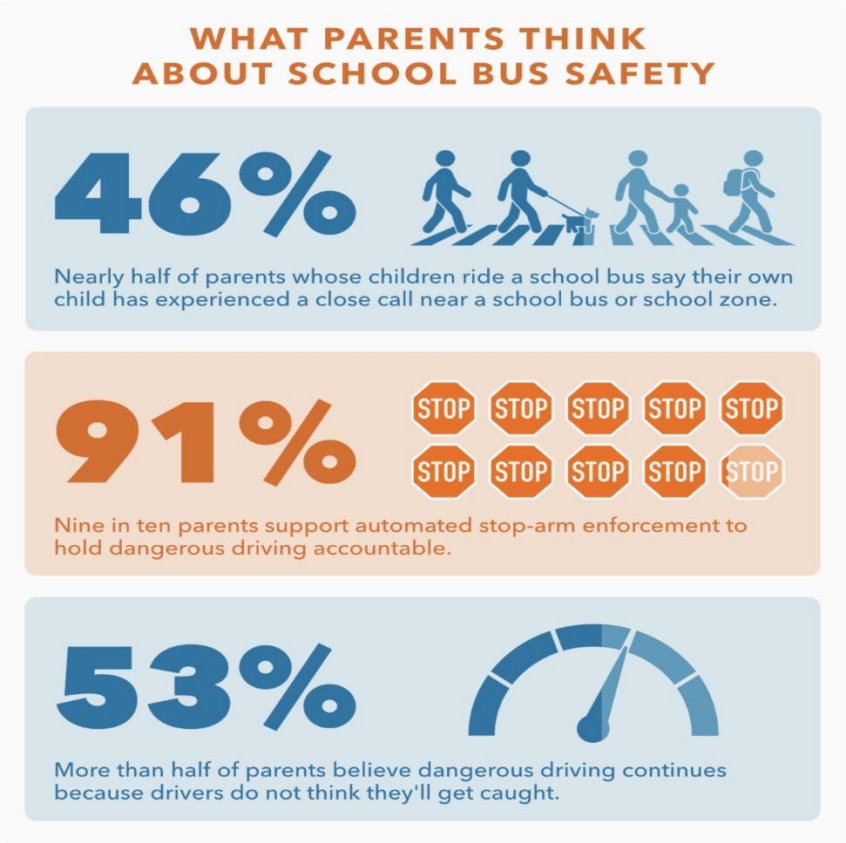
The survey found that nearly half (46%) of parents whose children ride a school bus say their own child has experienced a close call near a school bus or in a school zone. The findings also suggest parents do not view dangerous driving as simply a problem of awareness: 53% believe dangerous driving continues because motorists do not think they will get caught.

At the same time, parents expressed overwhelming support for stronger accountability. Ninety-one percent of parents surveyed support automated stop-arm enforcement to hold drivers accountable for illegally passing stopped school buses.

Taken together, the findings point to a clear conclusion: Parents believe dangerous driving around schools and school buses is not an isolated problem, but a recurring safety issue that requires stronger accountability, education and enforcement.

A copy of the survey findings can be found on the GHSA website.

“Parents are telling us that dangerous driving around school buses and school zones is not an abstract concern but something their children are experiencing firsthand,” said GHSA Chief Executive Officer Jonathan Adkins. “Educating motorists about safe driving around school buses and in school zones is essential to safer streets, but these findings confirm that parents also want meaningful accountability when drivers put children at risk. With another school year underway, communities are encouraged to use every proven tool and technology available to help make the trip to and from school safer.”



The new national survey adds the voices of parents to the growing momentum for school bus safety, demonstrating broad public support for stronger action and underscoring the urgency of protecting children at the moments when they are most vulnerable: boarding and exiting school buses, crossing streets and traveling through school zones.

For many families, concerns about dangerous driving are rooted in personal experience. When asked to describe dangerous situations in their own words, parents repeatedly pointed to drivers illegally passing stopped school buses, speeding through school zones and driving distracted, sometimes coming within feet of children.

· *"My child was getting on the bus and someone tried passing on the side my child was walking on and almost struck my child."*

· *"[A] child was crossing in front of the bus while the lights were flashing and the stop sign was out. A car swerved and came within feet of the child."*

When asked what local leaders could do to make school travel safer, parents repeatedly called for stronger enforcement, including automated camera technology.

· *"Having automated stop-arm cameras installed on every school bus to instantly catch and ticket drivers who illegally pass them would make a huge difference. It would also help to have more crossing guards stationed at the busiest intersections near the school zones during drop-off and pick-up hours."*

· *"Install stop-arm cameras on all school buses in the district. Automated ticketing for drivers who illegally pass buses would be the single most effective action to improve safety."*

The findings come as families across the country enter a new school year and build on GHSA's broader work to address the persistent threat children face traveling to and from school.

Earlier this year, GHSA released *A National Action Plan for School Bus Safety*, a comprehensive set of 69 concrete, actionable recommendations aimed at improving school bus and school zone safety. The plan calls for a comprehensive approach that combines public education, roadway and infrastructure improvements, stronger policies and enforcement, and greater use of safety technology, including automated enforcement, to deter dangerous driving and change motorist behavior.

A total of 525 U.S. parents with children ages 6–17 living at home were surveyed between June 16–25, 2026. Separate oversamples included 250 parents in Texas and 251 parents in Ohio, interviewed between June 26–28, 2026. The survey was conducted by the Ocamb Group. BusPatrol provided financial support for the survey.

About GHSA

The Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA) is a nonprofit association representing the highway safety offices of states, territories, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. GHSA provides leadership and representation for the states and territories to improve traffic safety, influence national policy, enhance program management and promote best practices. Its members are appointed by their Governors to administer federal and state highway safety funds and implement state highway safety plans. Visit ghsa.org for more information or follow us on LinkedIn, YouTube, Facebook and X.