

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.S.B. 445
By: Hughes
Transportation
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, many independent school districts transitioned to virtual learning, leaving many children who depend on the free and reduced lunch provided by schools to go hungry. Some districts were quick to act and deployed school buses to certain stops to distribute meals to those children, but using the stop alert system equipped on school buses for this purpose is not currently authorized under statute. C.S.S.B. 445 seeks to remedy this situation by providing for the use of the flashing warning signal light on school buses for purposes of distributing food or technological equipment to students.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

C.S.S.B. 445 amends the Transportation Code to authorize the operator of a school bus to activate all flashing warning signal lights and certain other warning equipment on the bus when the bus is being stopped or is stopped on a highway to distribute to a student, or the student's parent or guardian, food or technological equipment for use by the student for educational purposes.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2021.

COMPARISON OF SENATE ENGROSSED AND SUBSTITUTE

While C.S.S.B. 445 may differ from the engrossed in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following summarizes the substantial differences between the introduced and committee substitute versions of the bill.

The engrossed authorized the operator of a school bus who is distributing food to a student or the student's parent or guardian, to activate all flashing warning signal lights and other equipment on the bus designed to warn other drivers that the bus is stopping when the bus is being stopped or is stopped on a highway. The substitute authorizes an operator to do so also to distribute technological equipment for use by a student for educational purposes.