



Newsletter From Rep. Matthew J. Shepherd District 97

August 7, 2025

Flashing Red Means Kids Ahead

As the new school year begins, thousands of school buses will once again be on the roads across Arkansas, transporting more than 350,000 children safely to and from school each day. That's more than 350,000 reasons for all of us to stay alert and follow the law. Each stop a bus makes, whether in a neighborhood, on a highway, or outside a school, is an opportunity for a child to safely start or end their school day. But that safety depends on all of us.

We want to remind Arkansans: **it is illegal to pass a stopped school bus in our state.** And for good reason.

In 2005, the Arkansas General Assembly passed **Isaac's Law (Act 2128)** after the tragic death of Isaac Brian, a young student in the Bryant School District who was killed when a driver illegally passed a stopped school bus. This law significantly increased penalties for drivers who violate bus safety laws. It also serves as a solemn reminder of what's at stake.

Here's what you need to know:

- **On both 2-lane and 4-lane roads**, even those with center turn lanes, drivers must stop in *both directions* when a school bus is loading or unloading children.
- **Act 264 of 2021** clarified that vehicles must stop at least **30 feet away** from the bus. This applies to public streets, school parking lots, and even private driveways that are open to the public.
- When the bus is stopped with flashing red lights and its stop arm extended, **you must stop and remain stopped** until the bus begins moving again.
- And don't forget: using a **handheld phone in a school zone** is not just dangerous, it's also illegal in Arkansas, thanks to legislation passed in 2019.

Flashing red lights mean children are nearby. Children who may not see you. Children who may not hear you. Children whose lives depend on you making the right decision.

Let's all do our part this school year to protect our students by staying focused, driving carefully, and always stopping for school buses. Because nothing is more important than getting Arkansas's children to school and back home safely.