Ohio Legislative Service Commission

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Fiscal Note & Local Impact Statement

Bill: S.B. 113 of the 128th G.A. **Date**: November 30, 2010

Status: As Introduced **Sponsor**: Sen. Patton

Local Impact Statement Procedure Required: Yes

Contents: Authorizes the use of traffic signs warning of the presence of a child with a disability

State Fiscal Highlights

- The Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) would incur costs to install warning signs on state highways if it considers the signs necessary for public safety and welfare. ODOT might also incur some additional cost over the years to maintain, replace, or remove these signs.

Local Fiscal Highlights

- Local authorities, chiefly municipalities, would incur costs to install the warning signs. The cost for manufacturing, installing, and maintaining these advisory signs could exceed $1,000 for some smaller political jurisdictions and $5,000 for some larger political subdivisions. These amounts are the dollar thresholds used to determine whether the Local Impact Statement Law applies to the bill.

Detailed Fiscal Analysis

The bill requires a local authority to establish a program for approving or denying requests to place traffic warning signs advising of the presence of a deaf or blind child. Under this process, the parent or guardian of a deaf or blind child may be required to provide medical verification justifying the need for the signs, and may be required to advise the local authority when the sign is no longer needed. The bill also requires the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) to adopt a similar program for placing these advisory signs on state routes. The cost of administering the program and installing the signs will depend on the number of parents or guardians who request these warning signs.

Local governments would incur the cost for signs installed on streets or highways under their jurisdiction, while ODOT would incur costs for installing these advisory signs along state routes. A set of warning signs is likely to cost several hundred dollars or so for the labor, equipment, and materials needed to install and maintain them. This means that it is possible that the bill would result in local costs that exceed minimal thresholds that apply under the Local Impact Statement Law, even if only a small number of signs are installed in any given political subdivision. These thresholds are $1,000 for smaller political subdivisions and $5,000 for larger political subdivisions.

In addition to installation and maintenance expenses, ODOT and local authorities would incur some minor new administrative expenses for developing program guidelines and reviewing sign applications and documentation. Based on conversations with the traffic engineering departments in Newport News, Virginia, and Salt Lake County, Utah, entities that currently operate similar warning sign programs, there are very few requests for the signs in any given year. This suggests that any new administrative costs associated with operating a similar program in Ohio are likely to be minimal, at most. Finally, because these warning signs are advisory in nature, motorists would not be subject to penalties for failing to heed these signs.

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