

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2013 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 359

(Senator Pugh, *et al.*)

Judicial Proceedings

Environmental Matters

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Education - School Vehicle Attendant

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This bill prohibits an individual from serving as a school vehicle attendant unless the individual is an employee of the local school system or transportation company that operates the school vehicle; is otherwise authorized by the local school system; or is a nurse, aide, or other individual assigned or authorized to work with a student according to the student's individualized education plan, 504 plan, or other student-specific written plan.

The bill also requires the school vehicle attendant to possess a photo identification that identifies the local school system or transportation company that employs the individual as a school vehicle attendant, or another authorizing document issued by the local school system that authorizes the individual to act as a school vehicle attendant for a child on the school vehicle.

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and the Motor Vehicle Administration can update or expand on existing regulations as necessary with budgeted personnel and resources. The bill is generally directed at local school systems and school bus contractors.

**Local Effect:** Providing school bus attendants in Howard and St. Mary's counties and Baltimore City with photo identification badges that meet the specifications of the bill may increase expenditures minimally.

**Small Business Effect:** Minimal. It is assumed that any costs incurred by small business bus contractors for photo identification badges will be passed onto the local school systems.

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## Analysis

**Current Law:** According to Title 13A of the Code of Maryland Regulations, before riding in the capacity of a school vehicle attendant on a school vehicle with students on board, a school vehicle attendant must complete a minimum of two hours of pre-service instruction that includes one hour of instruction in first aid and one hour of instruction appropriate to the duties of the attendant. Every 12 months an attendant must complete two hours of in-service instruction in topics that include equipment, student management, and first aid.

In addition, a school vehicle attendant must be in good health, mature, able to discharge the duties of the position, and able to command the respect of others. An attendant must also be able to exercise sound judgment to make appropriate decisions in emergency situations.

An individual may not serve as a school vehicle attendant if the individual has been convicted of a criminal charge or if a criminal charge is pending for a crime involving (1) child abuse or neglect; (2) contributing to the delinquency of a minor; (3) moral turpitude, if the offense bears directly on the individual's fitness to assist minors; (4) a crime of violence; or (5) any conduct that may endanger the safety of students being transported. In addition, an individual who pleads guilty or *nolo contendere* with respect to, is placed on probation before judgment with respect to, or is convicted, of one of those crimes is permanently disqualified from serving as a school vehicle attendant.

An individual who pleads guilty or *nolo contendere* with respect to, or is convicted of an alcohol or controlled substance offense as defined in federal or State law is disqualified from serving as a school vehicle attendant for a period of 10 years from the date of action. Misfeasance, incompetence, insubordination, or any act or omission that adversely affects transportation or safety may be grounds for disqualification and termination by the supervisor of transportation. MSDE's Office of Pupil Transportation must maintain a confidential computer database of attendants who have been disqualified.

**Background:** According to MSDE, in 16 of the State's 24 local school systems all school bus attendants are school system employees and are issued photo identification badges; in 4 local school systems (Charles, Kent, Garrett, and Wicomico counties) all school bus attendants are contractor employees and are issued photo identification badges listing only the school system. In Cecil County, school bus attendants who are school system employees have a photo identification badge listing the school system; those who are contractor employees have badges which list both the school system and the contractor.

School bus attendants in Howard and St. Mary's counties and Baltimore City are not issued photo identification that meet the requirements of the bill. School bus attendants in Howard County are employees of school bus contractors and are issued *nonphoto* identification badges. In St. Mary's County, the school system has some school bus attendants who are system employees and some school bus attendants who are contractor employees. However, both groups of employees have photo identification badges that list them as school system employees *only*. In Baltimore City, some school bus attendants are school system employees and some are school bus contractor employees. Only the school system employees are issued photo identification badges; approximately 60 school bus contractor employees currently do *not* have photo identification badges.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** A similar bill, SB 312 of 2012 received an unfavorable report from the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee. Its cross file, HB 606, received an unfavorable report from the House Environmental Matters Committee.

**Cross File:** Although HB 530 (Delegate Pena-Melnyk – Environmental Matters) is designated as the cross file, the bills are not identical.

**Information Source(s):** Baltimore City, Kent County, Maryland State Department of Education, Maryland Department of Transportation, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 12, 2013  
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