



February 17, 2022

Senate Bill 421

Primary and Secondary Schools – Bus Driver Wages – Study

Senate Finance Committee

Position: FAVORABLE

Anne Arundel County **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill 421 – Primary and Secondary Schools – Bus Driver Wages – Study. This bill will require the Governor's Workforce Development Board to evaluate, study, and identify certain issues relating to wages paid to school bus drivers and report its findings to the governing body of each county and Baltimore City, each county board of education, including Baltimore City, the Governor, and the General Assembly.

Anne Arundel County, like so many jurisdictions across the country, has struggled with a shortage of qualified school bus drivers. This shortage has led to critical transportation delays, required drivers to drive double routes, and on occasion, failures to get kids to school. These issues disrupt the lives of our students and their families. They also have ripple effects on our businesses when parents have to scramble to get their kids to school, impacting their ability to get to work. This hurts everyone in our County, but those that feel it the most are working families.

When routes started getting canceled or delayed here in Anne Arundel County, we worked with our school system to help provide financial assistance and incentives to attract and retain drivers. By providing hiring bonuses, retention bonuses, and higher hourly wages using American Rescue Plan (ARP) dollars, county ARP dollars, and future county budgets, we were able to retain our existing school bus drivers as well as attract new drivers to meet the challenge. A statewide study of these issues relating to school bus driver wages will go a long way in ensuring that school bus driver shortages will be a thing of the past.

Accordingly, Anne Arundel County respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE** report on Senate Bill 421.