



**Favorable Written Testimony
February 17, 2022
Senate Finance Committee
Service Employees International Union Local 500**

SUPPORT

**SENATE BILL 421 – Primary and
Secondary Schools – Bus Driver
Wages - Study**

Our union represents the support staff at the Montgomery County Public School system, Family Child Care Providers, faculty at institutions of higher education, staff at non-profits and many other working people across the region. Our union is proud to represent over 1,400 staff who work in the transportation department of MCPS as bus drivers, bus attendants and bus route supervisors.

We are writing in support of SB 421 because our staff members need help! We also would like to thank you to Senator Rosapepe for taking leadership on this issue at a crisis moment. There is a shortage of qualified bus drivers and that is harming our kids' ability to get to school as well as creating stress for our current bus drivers and bus route supervisors. Our county and our state are in desperate need for more truck, school and municipal bus and equipment drivers. This bill is an important step in meeting that need.

If passed SB 421 would help counties identify the wages needed to fill bus driver shortages. Furthermore, it directs the Governor's Workforce Development Board to identify the wages that must be paid to bus drivers to ensure that the vacancy rate for bus drivers remains below 2%. This study needs to include studying prevailing wages for bus drivers. These findings will be sent to local boards of education who can use the information to fill the bus driver shortages. These are important jobs that serve our community and create family supporting jobs for many young Marylanders.

It's not often that bills come before a committee that are truly win-win but this is one of them. Our state is in a moment of crisis and this bill aims to alleviate that problem that we face with the shortage of bus drivers to safely drive our children to and from school. It provides a valuable community service, good jobs and is an investment in young professionals and their families. We urge you to help relieve the stress on current bus drivers and lift up future transportation professionals by supporting this bill.

We ask for your support for SB 421 and strongly urge a favorable committee report.

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Pia Morrison, President**