

msbca testimony on sb421.pdf

Uploaded by: Erin Appel

Position: FAV



February 17, 2022

The Honorable Delores Kelley and Members
Senate Finance Committee
Miller Senate Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Support – SB 421 – Primary and Secondary Schools – Bus Driver Wages – Study

Dear Chair Kelley and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland School Bus Contractors Association (MSBCA) supports SB 421 – Primary and Secondary Schools – Bus Driver Wages – Study. MSBCA serves as the voice of the private school bus companies that contract with local Maryland school systems in 18 of Maryland's 24 jurisdictions to own and operate the nearly 3500 contracted school buses that transport schoolchildren across the State. MSBCA remains committed to the safety of the students they transport and considers it a privilege to do so.

This emergency bill requires the Governor's Workforce Development Board (GWDB) within the Maryland Department of Labor to evaluate and report on the possibility of paying higher wages to school bus drivers in the State by July 1, 2022.

As you well know, we are facing a severe school bus driver shortage. While there are certainly a number of contributing factors, one of the greatest among them is driver pay. Traditionally, school bus drivers earn a wage far lower than their fellow Class B Commercial Drivers License holders. In recent months and very much in reaction to the school bus driver strikes that took place in multiple counties, many local jurisdictions took action to increase school bus driver compensation. Some of these increases were permanent, others one-time bonus payments. This bill takes an important step in highlighting at the State level the important role school bus drivers play, and the importance of compensating them accordingly and uniformly.

Once again, MSBCA supports SB 421 and asks for a favorable report. Thank you for your consideration and your commitment to our State.

Sincerely,

Steve Nelson

Steve Nelson, President
1 State Circle, Annapolis, MD 21401
410.268.3099

MSBCA serves as the voice of the private school bus companies that contract with local Maryland school systems in 18 of Maryland's 24 jurisdictions to own and operate the nearly 3500 contracted school buses that transport schoolchildren across the State.

Primary and Secondary Schools – Bus Driver Wages –

Uploaded by: Laura Stewart

Position: FAV

**Written Testimony Submitted for the Record to the
Maryland Senate
Finance Committee
For the Hearing on
Primary and Secondary Schools – Bus Driver Wages – Study (SB 421)
February 17, 2022**

SUPPORT

Free State PTA represents over 34,000 volunteer members and families in over 500 public schools. Free State PTA is comprised of families, students, teachers, administrators, and business as well as community leaders devoted to the educational success of children and family engagement in Maryland. As the state's premier and largest child advocacy organization, Free State PTA is a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families, schools and communities and a strong advocate for public education.

Free State PTA submits this testimony in support of Senate Bill 421 – Primary and Secondary Schools – Bus Driver Wages – Study. This bill requires the Governor's Workforce Development Board to evaluate, study, and identify certain issues related to wages paid to primary and secondary 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.

Free State PTA recognizes that bus drivers' wages and negotiations are an important part of operating public schools. The issue of wages for the bus drivers must be given proper review and recognition. Improper review and recognition of wages could lead to bus driver shortages and affect the children's safe transportation to and from home, school, and recreational activities. Adequate, diligent study and evaluation of bus driver wages is beneficial for alerting local school boards before a situation arises that could cause significant disruption to transportation of students to and from school and activities.

Senate Bill 421 requires that the Governor's Workforce Development Board do two key things:

1. Evaluate the possibility of paying prevailing wage rates, which is the estimated hourly rate of wages paid in the locality as determined by the Governor's Workforce Development Board, to bus drivers and
2. Study and identify the wages that must be paid to bus drivers to ensure that the vacancy rate for bus drivers is below 2% of the total number of bus drivers needed to serve primary and secondary schools in the State.

Because of the importance Free State PTA places on making quality after-school programs accessible for all children, it is important that prevailing wages are paid to bus drivers to help support travel to and from after-school programs and sporting events. Furthermore, we support appropriate wages as it helps garner a reliance on available bus drivers just as we encourage teacher salaries to commensurate with the professional preparation and dedication necessary for effective teaching.

Adequate study of wages can be helpful to understanding reasons for bus driver dissatisfaction and their needs for work requirements. School bus drivers require special licensing and as such they are smaller group of candidates that would have the proper qualification to perform this job. Accordingly, Senate Bill 421 supports students by ensuring that accurate data is available when determining proper wages for bus drivers so that adequate, safe, and efficient transportation is available without interruptions for students.

The mission of PTA is to make every child's potential a reality by
engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children. Page 1

Free State PTA speaks up for every child, and this legislation could be integral to ensuring adequate transportation for children so they can safely and efficiently travel to and from school and activities. This bill provides for the crucial data needed for understanding the suitable wages for bus drivers. The data can be used for thorough decision making regarding appropriate bus driver wages which can affect safe and efficient transportation of students. It is for these reasons above that Free State PTA urges a favorable vote in support of Senate Bill 421.

Testimony is presented on the behalf of

Marla Posey-Moss

Marla Posey-Moss, President

Free State Parent Teacher Association

president.fsptamd@gmail.com

Anne Arundel County _FAV_SB 421.pdf

Uploaded by: Peter Baron

Position: FAV



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.

2022 Testimony Senate Bill 421 Senator Rosapepe Pr

Uploaded by: Travis Simon

Position: FAV



**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.

**Service Employees International Union Local 500
901 Russell Avenue, Gaithersburg, MD, 20879
301-740-7100 www.seiu500.org
Pia Morrison, President**

SB0421-403524-01 (1).pdf

Uploaded by: Jim Rosapepe

Position: FWA



SB0421/403524/1

AMENDMENTS
PREPARED
BY THE
DEPT. OF LEGISLATIVE
SERVICES

14 FEB 22
19:50:56

BY: Senator Rosapepe
(To be offered in the Finance Committee)

AMENDMENT TO SENATE BILL 421
(First Reading File Bill)

On page 1, in line 18, strike “July” and substitute “September”.

SB0421 Howard Co BOE Testimony 021722 for FIN - Bu

Uploaded by: Staff Howard County

Position: UNF



**Board of Education of Howard County
Testimony Submitted to the Maryland Senate,
Finance Committee
February 17, 2022**

**Board of Education
of Howard County**

Vicky Cutroneo, *Chair*
Antonia Watts, *Vice Chair*
Christina Delmont-Small
Yun Lu, Ph.D.
Jennifer Swickard Mallo
Jolene Mosley
Chao Wu, Ph.D.
Peter J. Banyas
Student Member
Michael J. Martirano, Ed.D.
*Superintendent
Secretary/Treasurer*

**SB0421: UNFAVORABLE
Primary and Secondary Schools – Bus Driver Wages – Study**

The Board of Education of Howard County (the Board) opposes **SB0421 Primary and Secondary Schools – Bus Driver Wages – Study** due to the unintended consequences of the requirements for the proposed study.

By July 1, 2022, the Governor's Workforce Development Board must evaluate the following under SB0421 and report the findings to local governments, county boards of education, and the General Assembly:

- The possibility of paying prevailing wage rates, which is the estimated hourly rate of wages paid in the locality as determined by the Governor's Workforce Development Board, to bus drivers; and
- Study and identify the wages that must be paid to bus drivers to ensure that the vacancy rate for bus drivers is below 2% of the total number of bus drivers needed to serve primary and secondary schools in the State.

While typically in the context of construction projects, as a legislative platform the Board opposes legislation that limits local flexibility in the use of prevailing wages.

Moreover, the second evaluation tasked to the Governor's Workforce Development Board as specifically worded in SB0421 above could harm local jurisdictions. For instance, where one county in a more rural/less expensive location is fully staffed, and they pay a lower wage, this would "indicate" that the rest of the state should pay what they are paying. Another area of concern is the potentially unattainable identification of wages that will "ensure" a less than 2% vacancy rate. While in theory increasing wages should attract more drivers, money is not the only reason for a driver shortage. The study makes no mention of the consideration of benefit packages offered by a county or contractor. A wage study could be beneficial to local school systems, however, such a study needs to compare all compensation and not include wording such as "must be paid."

For these reasons, we urge a UNFAVORABLE report of SB0421 from this Committee.

SB421_MSEA_Owusu_INFO.pdf

Uploaded by: Pokuaa Owusu-Acheaw

Position: INFO

**Informational Testimony regarding Senate Bill 421
Primary and Secondary Schools – Bus Driver Wages – Study**

**Finance
February 17, 2022**

**Pokuaa Owusu-Acheaw
Government Relations**

The Maryland State Education Association offers this informational testimony on Senate Bill 421, legislation that requires the Governor’s Workforce Development Board (GWDB) within the Maryland Department of Labor (MDL) to evaluate and report on the possibility of paying higher wages to school bus drivers in the State by July 1, 2022.

MSEA represents 76,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland’s public schools, teaching and preparing our almost 900,000 students for the careers and jobs of the future. MSEA also represents 39 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3 million-member National Education Association (NEA).

The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated existing shortages in all job classifications for our educational support professionals. One group that has been under the spotlight during the return to in school instruction are our bus drivers. We are appreciative to the bill sponsors for their continued work to advocate for members of our education support professional community, especially during a time when we face critical staffing shortages in retaining and attracting individuals to the profession. However, the issue of low wages and staffing shortages apply to almost all classifications of education support professionals in our state.

Employees are attracted to jobs in which they can earn a livable wage in order to meet the many challenges of raising and sustaining a family. And as school employees trusted to transport, care, and educate our students, the least we can do



as a state is guarantee they can earn a living wage. Their public service is vital to meeting the needs of students and schools.

We are supportive of legislation that would create a workgroup to study increasing wages for all educational support staff classifications in the state. For this reason, we are in favor of Senate Bill 831, which would establish a workgroup to study and determine solutions on increasing wages and addressing issues of recruiting and retention in all job classifications.