

## **2.13.24 House Bill 478 Testimony\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Christian Gobel

Position: FAV

**FAVORABLE**  
**House Bill 478**  
**Motor Vehicles – School Vehicle Drivers – Medical Examinations**

**House Environment and Transportation Committee**  
**February 15, 2024**

**Christian Gobel**  
**Government Relations**

The Maryland State Education Association supports House Bill 478. House Bill 478 requires a school bus driver to pass a medical examination both before employment and once during each two years of employment after commencing employment. House Bill 478 aids in solving the bus driver shortage by providing flexibility regarding when a school vehicle driver must undergo a required medical examination in connection with their employment.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our almost 900,000 students so they can pursue their dreams. 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).

Current Maryland regulations require school vehicle drivers to undergo medical examinations prior to their employment and annually to certify their fitness for duty.<sup>1</sup> House Bill 478 preserves the requirement that individuals must undergo a medical examination prior to commencing their employment but allows employers the option to either require a medical examination annually or once every two years for their school vehicle drivers. This change comports with standards established by the U.S. Department of Transportation, which treat DOT physical exams for operators of commercial motor vehicles as valid for up to twenty-four months, subject to certain exceptions.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Md. Code Regs. 11.19.05.01(A).

<sup>2</sup> 49 C.F.R. § 391.45(b).



We support efforts by policymakers to address the school bus driver shortage in Maryland, which unfortunately persists. School districts across the nation,<sup>3</sup> and in Maryland,<sup>4</sup> continue to face challenges recruiting and retaining school bus drivers.

MSEA also supports legislation, whether in this bill or a separate bill, that would require employers to shoulder the cost of initial medical examinations for job-applicants seeking to become bus drivers. Initial medical examinations vary in cost and not all prospective employers are willing to pay this cost for their potential employees. Removing this cost barrier would be an additional tool to recruit individuals to become bus drivers.

MSEA will continue to support lawmakers and policies that aim to create a sustainable pipeline for the education workforce. Education support professionals, including school bus drivers, should have job opportunities that provide them with a living wage, decent benefits, a secure retirement, and the ability to join a union.

**We urge the committee to issue a Favorable Report on House Bill 478.**

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<sup>3</sup> Cindy Long, *School Bus Driver Shortage Persists*, National Education Association (Dec. 14, 2023), <https://www.nea.org/nea-today/all-news-articles/school-bus-driver-shortage-persists>.

<sup>4</sup> Paul Gessler, *What Baltimore-area school districts are doing to work around bus driver shortage*, CBS News Baltimore (Aug. 21, 2023), <https://www.cbsnews.com/baltimore/news/baltimore-area-school-districts-draw-up-plans-to-work-around-bus-driver-shortage/>.

# **HB478 Testimony.pdf**

Uploaded by: Renee M Harris

Position: FAV

**SHEREE SAMPLE-HUGHES**  
*Legislative District 37A*  
Dorchester and Wicomico Counties

—  
SPEAKER PRO TEM  
—

Economic Matters Committee

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Nominations Committee



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**THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES**  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**TESTIMONY FOR ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORTATION**

**CHAIR MARC KORMAN**  
**VICE CHAIR REGINA T. BOYCE**

**HOUSE BILL 478 – MOTOR VEHICLES – SCHOOL VEHICLE DRIVERS – MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS**

**SUPPORT**

**February 15, 2024**

Good afternoon Chair Korman and Vice Chair Boyce and members of Environment & Transportation Committee. I am here today to ask for your support for HB 478 – Motor Vehicles – School Vehicle Drivers – Medical Examinations. HB 478 changes the current State requirements for School Bus Drivers passing medical examinations from annually up to every two years. However, if a jurisdiction chooses to be more restrictive, they retain the ability to do so. HB 478 as HB71 unanimously (137 – 0) passed the House on March 2, 2023.

This change will align the State of Maryland with current federal requirements. In doing so, we will become more competitive in maintaining our school bus drivers in counties such as Garrett, Wicomico, and Worcester. These counties all border States with the proposed requirements already in place: Pennsylvania, Delaware and Virginia. This proposed change comes at a time when the MVA Medical Review Board allows the public to submit complaints, which are then prioritized by the MVA in conjunction with the local school board. Currently, the provision requires the signature of a physician certified by U.S. Department of Transportation. These physicians are not always accessible.

In Maryland amidst the current statewide worker shortages, particularly in education, we need our school bus drivers more than ever. HB 478 helps alleviate this post-pandemic shortage by removing a barrier to entry for prospective school bus-drivers and by lessening a burden on current ones.

For this reason, I am asking for a favorable report on HB 478. Thank you for your time.

# 2024 HB 478 Med Exam - Sample Hughes.pdf

Uploaded by: Steve Nelson

Position: FAV



February 13, 2024

The Honorable Marc Korman and Members  
House Environment and Transportation Committee  
House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**Re: Support – HB 478 - Motor Vehicles – School Vehicle Drivers – Medical Examinations**

Dear Chairman Smith and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland School Bus Contractors Association (MSBCA) supports **HB 478, Motor Vehicles – School Vehicle Drivers – Medical Examinations**. 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, that 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.

As you well know, we are facing a severe school bus driver shortage. This shortage is not limited to Maryland. MSBCA is committed to maintaining the highest standard of health and safety for students and drivers, making Maryland the state to attract the best drivers in the country.

House Bill 478 would authorize the MVA to require medical exams for Commercial Driver's License – Class S (CDL-S) licensed school bus driver to have a medical examination before employment and once during each two (2) years of employment. MSBCA believes this bill would continue to allow healthy, properly trained drivers behind the wheels of our school buses here in Maryland, while not sacrificing safety.

MSBCA supports HB 478 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

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*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.*

# **HB0478 - MVA - School Bus Driver Medical Exams\_LOI**

Uploaded by: Patricia Westervelt

Position: INFO



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February 13, 2024

The Honorable Marc Korman  
Chair, House Environment and Transportation Committee  
251 House Office Building  
Annapolis MD 21401

**Re: *Letter of Information – House Bill 478 – Motor Vehicles - School Vehicle Drivers - Medical Examinations***

Dear Chair Korman and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) offers the following letter of information for the Committee’s consideration on House Bill 478.

House Bill 478 would require a biennial Medical Examiner’s Certificate (MEC) for Commercial Driver’s License (CDL) holders possessing an S endorsement for school bus operation and additionally require such an exam for drivers of all school vehicles. This would increase the period between when a new MEC must be completed and filed with the MVA from its current requirement of every year for school bus endorsement holders.

The Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) has required an annual MEC since the 1980s and differs from the minimum standard of a biennial MEC required of CDL holders by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA). In a survey of 14 other states, including Virginia, the requirement for an annual MEC, or even more frequently, is matched by at least six other states that have an annual exam standard for at least a part of the population endorsed for school bus operation.

However, some of these states such as Nebraska and Louisiana require an annual MEC or equivalent medical exam by law but require this of school bus drivers under the authority of the state’s Department of Education. Others, such as Rhode Island, require submission of and enforcement against failure to provide an exam to the local school district “School Bus Safety Office.” California and Connecticut have specific ages for a bus driver at which time an annual, or even more frequent in the case of Connecticut, medical exam is required but only a biennial is until that age has been reached. Finally, states such as Kentucky require an annual exam and the state’s Department of Motor Vehicles enforces the requirement.

Thanks to the new Customer Connect IT system completed in December 2021, the MVA was able to improve and simplify the process for submitting a required MEC for CDL holders. Now a MEC can be directly uploaded via the online portal instead of submitted by fax or postal mail, and an automated email confirms receipt of the MEC for the customer’s records.

The Honorable Marc Korman.  
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The new myMVA profile also allows for greater ease of communication for friendly courtesy reminders of upcoming deadlines for submission of paperwork or renewal requirements along with copies of all correspondence mailed to customers. Customer Connect and myMVA has truly upgraded the customer experience and elevated the premier customer service the MVA is able to provide Marylanders.

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee consider this information during its deliberations of House Bill 478.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine E. Nizer  
Administrator  
Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration  
410-787-7830

Pilar Helm  
Director of Government Affairs  
Maryland Department of Transportation  
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