

JOHN A. OLSZEWSKI, JR.
County Executive



JENNIFER AIOSA
Director of Government Affairs

AMANDA KONTZ CARR
Legislative Officer

WILLIAM J. THORNE
Legislative Associate

BILL NO.: **SB 724**

TITLE: Motor Vehicles – School Buses – Seat Belts

SPONSOR: Senator Benson

COMMITTEE: Judicial Proceedings

POSITION: **OPPOSE**

DATE: February 22, 2024

Baltimore County **OPPOSES** Senate Bill 724 – Motor Vehicles – School Buses – Seat Belts. This legislation requires that all school buses purchased after October 2024 are equipped with seat belts. In addition, any school bus purchased prior to October 2024 would be required to be outfitted with seat belts from 2026.

Baltimore County has concerns about the cost of and short time frame for retrofitting existing buses. The short time frame may take too many buses out of rotation in order to complete the retrofitting. It would cost Baltimore County approximately \$15,000 per bus to retrofit and Baltimore County Public Schools has 750 buses that would need to be retrofitted, excluding contract buses. That would total \$11,250,000 that Baltimore County would need to spend on retrofitting these buses. While the State of Maryland and Baltimore County must continue to improve the safety of school transportation, the lack of funding provided by SB 724 would place a financial burden on Baltimore County that it currently would not be able to meet.

Accordingly, Baltimore County urges a **UNFAVORABLE** report on SB 724 from the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee. For more information, please contact Jenn Aiosa, Director of Government Affairs at jaiosa@baltimorecountymd.gov.