

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2001 Session

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 441 (Delegates Malone and Moe)
Commerce and Government Matters

Vehicle Laws - Commercial Drivers' Licenses - Special School Bus Endorsement

This bill requires a school bus driver to obtain a special endorsement issued by the Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) for the driver's commercial driver's license. The bill applies only to individuals applying for school bus driver's licenses on or after the bill's October 1, 2001 effective date.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The MVA advises that it can alter the existing commercial driver's skills test for school bus drivers with existing resources. Any increase in Transportation Trust Fund revenues is assumed to be minimal.

Local Effect: The bill is not expected to have a significant impact on local government operations or finances.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Current Law: A State-issued endorsement of a commercial driver's license is required for operators of double and triple trailers, vehicles designed to transport 16 or more passengers (including the driver), tanks, and vehicles that transport hazardous material. Commercial drivers who now must receive a State endorsement must first complete a skills test tailored to the type of vehicle they will operate. School bus operators must obtain a commercial driver's license and a State-issued endorsement for passenger vehicles.

Background: The MVA advises that the bill is intended to ensure that school bus drivers know proper safety procedures for the loading and unloading of schoolchildren, using emergency exits, and traversing highway rail grade crossings. The MVA anticipates that it would meet the bill's requirements by altering the current commercial driver's license skills test for school bus drivers. The bill is also intended to comply with the federal Motor Carrier Improvement Act of 1999 (Public Law 106-159), which directs the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Transportation to conduct a rulemaking that would establish a special commercial driver's license endorsement for school bus drivers. That rule has not been issued yet, according to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration.

The MVA advises that the bill will mainly apply to new bus drivers; drivers who have been issued a passenger vehicle endorsement prior to the effective date of the bill or who can provide proof of school bus driving experience will not be affected. There are approximately 10,000 school bus drivers in the State. Bus drivers who need to obtain the endorsement must pay \$90 in fees.

Small Business Effect: Small businesses that provide school bus driving services (including tour companies) will need to ensure that all drivers have endorsements of their commercial driver's licenses.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: SB 133 (Chairman, Judicial Proceedings Committee) – Judicial Proceedings.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of Transportation (Motor Vehicle Administration), U. S. Department of Transportation, Department of Legislative Services

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