



Larry Hogan
Governor
Boyd K. Rutherford
Lt. Governor
Gregory Slater
Secretary

January 20, 2021

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.
Chairman, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis MD 21401

Re: Letter of Support – Senate Bill 91 – Criminal Law – Assault of a Public Transportation Operator - Penalties

Dear Chairman Smith and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation Maryland Transit Administration (MDOT MTA) supports Senate Bill 91, as it enhances the safety of our public transit operators and reinforces the important role that these individuals play for our State.

Senate Bill 91 would increase the penalty for voluntarily causing physical injury to bus, train, or light rail operators or any other individuals providing public transportation services, from 2nd degree misdemeanor assault to 2nd degree felony assault. Currently, the penalty is only increased for those who assault a law enforcement officer, first responder on duty, or a parole or probation officer.

MDOT MTA is grateful for the service of our dedicated men and women who operate our buses, light rail, metro subway, MARC, and mobility vehicles. These individuals drive our children to school each day, transport the vulnerable to medical appointments, and ensure the workers of our State arrive at their place of employment on time. The current COVID-19 pandemic has only further highlighted the vital nature of their work.

Since 2013, an average of 50 assaults against MDOT MTA operators are reported each year. Just this past October, a 20-year veteran MTA bus operator was assaulted and shot to death in broad daylight while on the job. MDOT MTA believes that any assault committed against our operators is reprehensible and should be treated with the same severity as assaults against other front-line workers. The increased penalties in Senate Bill 91 will serve as a strong deterrent to any individuals considering violence against our operators and underscores that the state of Maryland truly values the essential nature of their work.

For these reasons, the Maryland Department of Transportation and Maryland Department of Transportation Maryland Transit Administration respectfully request that the Committee grant Senate Bill 91 a favorable report.

Respectfully submitted,

Greg Slater
Secretary
Maryland Department of Transportation
410-865-1001

Kevin B. Quinn, Jr.
Administrator
Maryland Transit Administration
410-767-3943