



MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

AFFILIATED WITH NATIONAL AFL-CIO

7 School Street • Annapolis, Maryland 21401-2096

Office. (410) 269-1940 • Fax (410) 280-2956

President

Donna S. Edwards

Secretary-Treasurer

Gerald W. Jackson

SB 91 – Assault on Public Transportation Operator - Penalties Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee January 20, 2021

SUPPORT

**Donna S. Edwards
President
Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO**

Chairman Smith and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 91 – Assault on Public Transportation Operator - Penalties. My name is Donna S. Edwards, and I am the President of the Maryland State and District of Columbia AFL-CIO. On behalf of the 340,000 union members in the state of Maryland, I offer the following comments in support of SB 91.

Assault on our public employees is an assault on all of us. Current law recognizes that fact by imposing felony penalties for a physical assault if the victim is a police officer, firefighter, first responder, or parole officer, that is engaged in the performance of their job. Unfortunately, our transit workers, are not covered under that umbrella of greater protection if they happen to be assaulted on the job.

Transportation workers interact with the public on a daily basis, and are, oftentimes, the subject of assault. These workers are the face of our transportation system – providing top-notch service to everyone who utilizes public transportation – and they deserve the same respect and protection afforded to other public employees who are at risk of being assaulted on the job. With several high profile assaults on transportation workers in Maryland in recent months, it is imperative that we act sooner, rather than later, on imposing stiffer penalties against those who would bring harm on our bus drivers and train operators.

It is time for us to bring our transportation workers up to parity with police, firefighters, first-responders, and parole officers, by imposing felony penalties for those who might do them harm.

We urge a favorable report on SB 91.