

SENATOR SARAH ELFRETH
Legislative District 30
Anne Arundel County

Budget and Taxation Committee

Subcommittees

Education, Business and Administration

Chair, Pensions

Senate Chair

Joint Committee on Administrative,
Executive, and Legislative Review

Joint Committee on the Chesapeake and
Atlantic Coastal Bays Critical Area



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

January 27, 2021

Testimony in Favor of SB0253
Vehicle Laws - School Bus Safety - Occupant Capacity

Chairman Smith, Vice-Chairman Waldstreicher, and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

I respectfully request a favorable report of Senate Bill 253. This bill would require that a school bus be routed with the intent that the number of pupils on the bus not exceed the manufacturer's rated seating capacity. The bill also provides flexibility and an exception during emergency circumstances, thereby, when the situation calls for it, the number of pupils on the bus to exceed the seating capacity.

This legislation was first introduced by former Delegate Alice Cain last legislative session, where it passed the house unanimously ([HB1226, 2020 Session](#)), but unfortunately was not able to move forward in the Senate because of the early adjournment.

My community, like so many other communities across the State, has experienced the problem that this legislation is trying to address -- children being packed into an overcrowded school bus and therefore dangerously forced to stand while the bus is transporting them to and from school. Today you will hear from education advocates in my district who have experienced this problem and hear directly from a parent whose own child experienced this unsafe overcrowding.

SB 253 will ensure that safety is prioritized from the beginning planning stages when school systems plan bus routes. I once again respectfully request a favorable report of this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah Elfreth". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sarah Elfreth

