

Testimony in Support with Amendments to House Bill 72 County Boards of Education—Student Transportation—Vehicles

**House Ways and Means Committee
January 20, 2021
1:30 pm**

**Tina N. Dove, M.Ed.
Government Relations**

The Maryland State Education Association is in support, with amendments, of House Bill 72, legislation that would authorize county boards of education to utilize vehicles other than school buses to transport certain students under specified circumstances to and from school.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our 896,837 students for careers and jobs of the future. MSEA also represents 39 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3 million-member National Education Association (NEA).

MSEA understands the problem this legislation seeks to correct and believes that allowing districts and local boards some flexibility in right-fitting a solution that meets their unique needs is the right thing to do. We do, however, believe some parameters need to be put in place to ensure the safety and protection of both our students being transported and the adults doing the transporting.

We would ask that the following provisions be included in the legislation if it is to move forward:

1. That language be added requiring any vehicle that is to be used to transport students be made to adhere to minimum federal, state, and local safety standards to the degree possible.
2. That language be added requiring that the people responsible for transporting students be school district employees, subject to the same training, security, health, safety, and employment provisions as those who currently operate school buses in the respective school districts.



We believe these amendments would ensure that the vehicles used to transport our students are as safe as they can be given the exact types of vehicles used and that the people operating said vehicles are as well screened, well trained, and well protected as our other district transportation professionals.

We ask the committee to issue a Favorable Report with the above referenced amendments to House Bill 72.