



**Favorable Written Testimony
February 9, 2022
Education, Health, and
Environmental Affairs Committee
Service Employees International Union Local 500**

SUPPORT FOR SENATE BILL 422

Our union represents the support staff at the Montgomery County Public School system, Family Child Care Providers, faculty at institutions of higher education, staff at non-profits and many other working people across the region. Our union is proud to represent over 1,400 staff who work in the transportation department of MCPS as bus drivers, bus attendants and bus route supervisors.

We are writing in support of SB 422 because our staff members need help! We also would say a special thank you to Senator Rosapepe for taking leadership on this issue at a crisis moment. There is a shortage of qualified bus drivers and that is harming our kids' ability to get to school as well as creating stress for our current bus drivers and bus route supervisors. Our county and our state are in desperate need for more truck, school and municipal bus and equipment drivers. This bill is an important step in meeting that need.

The bill would create a high school career and technical education pathway for Maryland students to earn their commercial driver's licenses shortly after turning 18. It would also allow a local school system to hire school bus drivers if they are 19 and half years old and have three years of driving experience. These are important jobs that serve our community and create family supporting jobs for many young Marylanders.

It's not often that bills come before a committee that are truly win-win but this is one of them. It provides a valuable community service, good jobs and is an investment in young professionals and their families. We urge you to help relieve the stress on current bus drivers and lift up future transportation professionals by supporting this bill.

We ask for your support for SB 422 and strongly urge a favorable committee report.

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