



Maryland Motor Truck Association

9256 Bendix Road, Suite 203, Columbia, MD 21045
Phone: 410-644-4600 Fax: 410-644-2537



HEARING DATE: February 9, 2022

BILL NO/TITLE: **Senate Bill 422 – Education – Jobs That Require Driving – Requirements (Drivers Education for Good Jobs Act of 2022)**

COMMITTEE: Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs

POSITION: **Support**

Maryland Motor Truck Association wholeheartedly offers its support for SB422, which would require the creation of a statewide career and technical education pathway for high school students to prepare for a career that requires driving skills and a driver's license.

The trucking industry is suffering from a massive labor shortage of drivers. National data released in late 2021 from the American Trucking Associations indicated the current shortfall is over 80,000 drivers. Projections indicate that shortage will reach 100,000 by 2023. A recent survey of 22 companies on MMTA's Board of Directors indicated a need for 650 drivers immediately – an average of 30 per company. Virtually every company that operates commercial trucks needs more drivers.

The lack of drivers has impaired an already fragile supply chain. Maryland's transportation system is the backbone of its commercial activity, with trucks providing the integral link for the state's rail system, the Thurgood Marshall BWI Airport, and the Port of Baltimore. Trucks are the hub of Maryland's distribution wheel, playing a vital role in the state's economic development as they safely and efficiently support the state's manufacturing, agricultural, and retail industries. Over 92 percent of Maryland's communities are served exclusively by truck, meaning that is the only way they get their goods. Without truck drivers, America's economy stops.

For many years, attracting younger drivers to the trucking industry was nearly impossible due to Federal age limits preventing 18-to-20 year-olds from hauling interstate freight. While all 50 states allow 18-year-olds to obtain a commercial driver's license, the Federal ban meant an 18-year-old adult could drive from Sacramento, California to San Diego, California (547 miles) or El Paso, Texas to Houston, Texas (744 miles) without issue, but could not drive along I-81 from Hagerstown, Maryland to Chambersburg, Pennsylvania (23 miles). This is extremely problematic for smaller states, or those whose major population centers and commerce routes are near the state's borders. However, the recent passage of the Federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act includes a pilot program to allow 3,000 younger adult drivers between ages 18 to 20 with a CDL to cross state lines after receiving additional training and if using vehicles equipped with extra safety technologies.

Williamsport High School is on the verge of becoming the first program in Maryland to enroll seniors in courses that will prepare them to take a commercial learners permit test. These students can then feed directly into the CDL training program at Hagerstown Community College. This should be occurring in counties across the state. The path to the middle class is changing. Many trucking companies had as many as three pay increases last year and a six-figure income is possible. There are vital industries in today's economy that offer opportunities for steady, good-paying jobs without the financial burden of a college degree. Trucking is one of those. MMTA believes the passage of SB422 will help promote driving as a career and encourage the Committee to offer a favorable report.

About Maryland Motor Truck Association: Maryland Motor Truck Association is a non-profit trade association representing the trucking industry since 1935. In service to its 1,000 members, MMTA is committed to supporting and advocating for a safe, efficient, and profitable trucking industry across all sectors and industry types, regardless of size, domicile, or type of operation.

For further information, contact: Louis Campion, (c) 443-623-4223