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Patrick Moran - President

Delegate Kumar P. Barve
House Environment and Transportation Committee
Room 251
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
Via email

March 28, 2022

Re. SB 599

Dear Chair Barve,

AFSCME Council 3 represents over 1,200 state employees who work in Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) branches statewide. SB 599 promotes the establishment of pilot programs in Howard and Montgomery counties to allow private drivers' schools to administer the examinations required to obtain certain driver's licenses here in Maryland. AFSCME Council 3 is opposed to SB 599 because instead of fixing the issues that are causing staffing shortages among MVA Driver License Agents, it provides the opportunity for two counties to privatize a critical function within the MVA – the test that determines if an applicant has the necessary skills to safely drive on our roads.

The purpose of drivers' schools is to teach applicants the skills to be able to pass the examination required to obtain a driver's license. A conflict of interest can occur when this same entity charges applicants to administer this same test now. Of course, such conflicts can be mitigated with the proper regulation and oversight, but we simply do not have confidence in the state to increase staffing in its regulatory and inspection job classifications when the trend has largely been to decrease the number of positions performing these roles for the state. The Maryland Department of Transportation currently has over 900 vacant positions across all classifications.

As is often the concern when public services are privatized, SB 599 also advantages those who can afford to pay for private examination *and* additional licensing fees while ignoring the issues that are plaguing the public service which are free and available to all. AFSCME members know firsthand how critical it is that Marylanders can obtain licensure in a timely and efficient manner. Despite limited resources, our MVA members do excellent work ensuring the safety of Marylanders on all our roads. MVA Driver's License Agents have been administering these examinations throughout the pandemic, despite receiving no recognition in the form of COVID response pay, which was given to other state employees who similarly could not socially distance while performing their job duties. Despite all these challenges, our members at the MVA have been doing a tremendous job assisting Marylanders. We should support their work and not privatize it.

For these reasons we urge an unfavorable report of SB 599. Thank you for your consideration.

Every AFSCME Maryland State and University contract guarantees a right to union representation.
An employee has the right to a union representative if requested by the employee.
800.492.1996

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Signed,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Patrick Moran', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Patrick Moran

Cc:

Members, House Environment and Transportation Committee