

hb 283 - occupant capacity.pdf

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February 1, 2022

The Honorable Kumar Barve and Members
Environment and Transportation Committee
House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Support – HB 283 – Vehicle Laws – School Bus Safety – Occupant Capacity

Dear Chairman Barve and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland School Bus Contractors Association (MSBCA) supports HB 283 – Vehicle Laws – School Bus Safety – Occupant Capacity. MSBCA serves as the voice of the private school bus companies that contract with local Maryland school systems in 18 of Maryland’s 24 jurisdictions to own and operate the nearly 3500 contracted school buses that transport schoolchildren across the State. MSBCA remains committed to the safety of the students they transport and considers it a privilege to do so.

There are 450,000 public school buses operating in the U.S., transporting 23.5 million minor students 4.3 billion miles annually. School buses are nearly 7 times safer in protecting passengers from motor vehicle related fatalities than other passenger vehicles. This is thanks to the school bus’ tank-like exterior as well as the use of compartmentalization, which provides for passive protection for unbelted passengers. Passengers remain in compartments between the high backed, padded bus seats and, in the event of an accident, the seat backs absorb passenger crash energy. MSBCA supports any effort to ensure all students being transported on school buses are seated properly and facing forward, which is the only way to ensure “compartmentalization” protection in the event of a crash.

Once again, MSBCA supports HB 283 and asks for a favorable report.

Thank you for your consideration and your commitment to our State.

Sincerely,

Steve Nelson

Steve Nelson, President
1 State Circle, Annapolis, MD 21403
410.268.3099

MSBCA serves as the voice of the private school bus companies that contract with local Maryland school systems in 18 of Maryland’s 24 jurisdictions to own and operate the nearly 3500 contracted school buses that transport schoolchildren across the State.

Del. Dana Jones_HB283_Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Dana Jones

Position: FAV



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony of Delegate Dana Jones
Before the Environment and Transportation Committee**

**In Support of HB283
Vehicle Laws—School Bus Safety—Occupant Capacity**

February 3, 2022, 1:00pm

Chair Barve, Vice-Chair Stein, and members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

I come before you today to reintroduce a bill that passed your committee unanimously last year and passed the House with a 133-2 vote. HB283 offers a simple solution to a dangerous problem.

Many of our students are forced to ride on overcrowded school buses that don't have enough seats for all students, with some students even having to stand in the aisle or sit on the floor of the bus. This goes against the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's recommendation that all school bus passengers be seated while a school bus is in motion.

This bill initially came about when parents in my district reached out three years ago about this problem after their concerns were dismissed by school district officials that used state law as the rationale for overcrowded buses. As you all know well, the session was cut short - not giving this common-sense piece of legislation a chance to get across the finish line.

News reports from prior to the pandemic have confirmed that this is a problem in several counties.¹

For example, a 2019 performance audit of Anne Arundel County Public Schools² found the school system is not managing its transportation services efficiently and suggested that

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- ¹- **Parents Sound Alarms About Crowded School Buses: Students report standing, sitting on the floor during rides.** [[Bethesda Magazine](#), 12/17/2019]
 - **Bus driver shortage leaves some Maryland students squatting in the aisles and sitting on each other's laps.** [[Baltimore Sun](#), 9/19/19]
 - **Anne Arundel faces school bus driver shortage, transportation issues.** [[Capital Gazette](#), 09/11/2019]

² [AACPS Performance Audit.pdf](#)

overcrowded buses could be solved through the application of routing software they already own.

We all can agree it is essential to secure the safety of all of our children. Students after a long day of school can easily become more rambunctious by the end of the day. Children crouched on the floor caused by too many kids on buses can only serve to distract drivers compounding this safety concern.

Additionally, this bill includes language that would allow for the limit of students to temporarily exceed seating capacity in cases of emergency as long as it is corrected in a reasonable amount of time.

I respectfully urge a favorable report on this simple, commonsense bill that would keep our children safe as they travel to and from school.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dana Jones". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Delegate Dana Jones

Testimony In Support of HB 283 - Environ and Trans

Uploaded by: Rich Ceruolo

Position: FAV



February 1, 2022

Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen St.
Annapolis, MD. 21401

In Support of HB 283: Vehicle Laws – School Bus Safety - Occupant Capacity

Members of the Maryland House of Environment & Transportation Committee.

We are an organization of military and non-military families with over 1300 members and fully support students with disabilities and health challenges. We fully support HB 283, in the hopes of addressing the variety of school bus safety concerns we have heard happening within MD's counties.

Far too often school buses are rolling on Maryland's streets that are overcrowded and creating unsafe conditions for our school students. And these overcrowding conditions have further exacerbated Covid infection spread while these conditions continue to exist during the current Covid 19 pandemic. We need our school districts focused more on student safety while working to limit community spread of the Covid 19 virus now and into the coming months. It's been more than 2 years and we can't keep kicking the can of taking decisive action down the road to the next school academic year.

We trust that with the passage of such safety laws, these school bus travel conditions will be rectified as soon as it is possible. The future success and health depend of all Maryland students hinges on necessary supports and guidelines being put in place. For today and beyond as part of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. Thank you all for supporting health and wellbeing of all Maryland students.

Please support House Bill 283 and return a favorable report. Thank you for your time, and for considering our testimony today.

Mr. Richard Ceruolo

richceruolo@gmail.com

Parent, Lead Advocate and Director of Public Policy

Parent Advocacy Consortium

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ParentAdvocacyConsortium>