



Larry Hogan
Governor
Boyd K. Rutherford
Lt. Governor
James F. Ports, Jr.
Secretary

January 13, 2022

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.
Chairman, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis MD 21401

Re: Letter of Support – Senate Bill 208 – Criminal Law – Assault of a Public Transportation Operator - Penalties

Dear Chairman Smith and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation Maryland Transit Administration (MDOT MTA) supports Senate Bill 208 as it will enhance the safety of our public transit operators and reinforce the important role these individuals perform for our State.

Senate Bill 208 increases the penalty for voluntarily causing physical injury to bus, train, or light rail operators or any other individuals providing public transportation services from second degree misdemeanor assault to second degree felony assault. Currently, the penalty is only increased for those who assault a law enforcement officer, first responder on duty, or a parole or probation officer.

The MDOT MTA is grateful for the service of the dedicated individuals who operate our buses, light rail, metro subway, MARC, and mobility vehicles. These individuals safely drive our children to school, transport the vulnerable to medical appointments, and ensure the workers of our State arrive at their place of employment on time. The current COVID-19 pandemic has only further highlighted the vital nature of their work.

Since 2013, an average of 50 assaults against MDOT MTA operators are reported each year. In the past two years, the MDOT MTA has lost two operators in the line of duty. The MDOT MTA believes that any assault committed against our operators is reprehensible and should be treated with the same severity as assaults against other front-line workers. The increased penalties in Senate Bill 208 will serve as a strong deterrent to any individuals considering violence against our operators and underscores that the State of Maryland truly values the essential nature of their work.

For these reasons, the Maryland Department of Transportation and the Maryland Department of Transportation Maryland Transit Administration respectfully request that the Committee grant Senate Bill 208 a favorable report.

Respectfully submitted,

James F. Ports, Jr.
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