



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

In Support of HB750

Education – Jobs That Require Driving – Requirements (Drivers Education for Good Jobs Act of 2022)

February 24, 2022, pm

Chair Atterbary, Vice-Chair Washington, and fellow members of the Ways and Means Committee, for the record - I am Delegate Dana Jones.

I come before you today to testify on HB750, the Drivers Education for Good Jobs Act.

In Maryland, all new drivers [must successfully complete a certified Driver Education Program course](#) that includes 30 hours of classroom learning and six (6) hours of behind-the-wheel training. These courses can cost hundreds of dollars per student, and although Driver's Ed. used to be included in the core curriculum of most high schools, most Maryland schools [stopped offering this course](#) in the late 90s and early 2000s. This has pushed the burden of getting this mandated training onto individual students and their families and creating a barrier of entry to careers in driving which often provide high wages.

Although the median income for many commercial drivers is a little over \$22 an hour¹, well above the minimum wage in most states, our nation is in desperate need of more qualified drivers. A recent 2021 report from the American Trucking Associations indicated the current shortfall is over 80,000 drivers, which is projected to increase to 100,000 by 2023². With this immense and growing lack of qualified drivers, it's no wonder that school districts across the state have been struggling to find enough school bus drivers to cover all the routes needed to get students safely to school.

HB750 would require the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Committee to establish a statewide career and technical education pathway for high school that helps students with - obtaining a standard driver's license, enrolling and completing the course requirements

¹ Occupational Outlook Handbook, Heavy and Tractor-trailer Truck Drivers [[The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), September 8, 2021]

² ATA Driver Shortage Report 2021 Executive Summary [[American Trucking Associations](#), 2021]

associated with professional licenses, completing on-the-road training, and obtaining a commercial or specialty driver's license. This would, in turn, give an option for schools to offer a career pathway for students interested in pursuing a career in driving.

Additionally, the bill would authorize local school systems and contractors to hire bus drivers starting at the age of 19 years and six months old, as long as they have at least three years of experience driving a vehicle. This authorization not only helps alleviate some of the pressure that school districts have been dealing with trying to find qualified drivers, but creates an immediate job market for recent graduates of the CTE's program.

I respectfully urge a favorable report on this legislation that supports our students, helps remove barriers to a high-paying career field, and addresses the lack of qualified drivers that has plagued our school's transportation systems for years.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dana Jones" with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Delegate Dana Jones