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Patrick Moran - President

SB 675 - Howard County and St. Mary's County - Driver's Licenses - Driver Skills Examinations

POSITION: UNFAVORABLE

AFSCME Council 3 represents over 1,200 state employees who work in the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) branches statewide. SB 675 promotes the establishment of pilot programs in Howard and St. Mary's counties to allow for private drivers' schools to administer the examinations required to obtain certain driver's licenses here in Maryland. AFSCME Council 3 is opposed to SB 675 because instead of fixing the issues that are causing staffing shortages among MVA Driver's 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 the same test now. Of course, such conflicts can be mitigated with the proper regulation and oversight, but many of our regulatory and inspection job classifications over been abolished over the last decade and critical shortages exist within these job titles as well. As of Nov.1, 2022, the Maryland Department of Transportation had 996 vacant positions.

As is often the concern when public services are privatized, SB 675 also advantages those who can afford to pay for private examination *and* additional licensing fees while ignoring the issues that plaguing the public service which are free and available to all. Any amount spent on contracting this service out would be better spent back on state employee salaries and benefits. DLS reports in the [FY24 MVA Budget Analysis](#) (pg. 10), that "departing employees are often moving to comparable positions in surrounding jurisdictions, such as the District of Columbia, that may offer more attractive salaries and benefits." 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. We should support their work with more staffing resources and not privatize it.

For these reasons, we urge the committee to provide an ***unfavorable*** report on SB 675. Thank you for your consideration.

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An employee has the right to a union representative if requested by the employee.
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