

February 8, 2024
HB0537
House Ways and Means Committee
Position: Support

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Each morning and afternoon, kids pile in and out of cars, arriving at and leaving school. When carpool is the predominant method for school transportation, we are left with a system that is unsafe for children, harmful to the environment, overwhelming to roadways, and disruptive to caretaker work schedules. As you know, Maryland has dozens of tax credit programs, including the Employer Commuter Tax credit which encourages commuters to switch from cars to buses, trains, bikes and more... resulting in safer, less congested, more environmentally-conscious commutes. Maryland has already taken this first step to get cars off the road at peak commuter times. A tax credit enabling more parents to use school buses carries this further.

The Nonpublic School Transportation Task Force arrived at this policy proposal with the input of stakeholders from all sectors. Children are safer when driven on buses as opposed to hundreds of car driving on the same roads. And at a time of significantly heightened caution for many communities, namely those targeted for Hate Crimes, more organized and monitored movement of children is called for. Tens or even hundreds of cars line up in front of schools and children hop out of each one, a constant stream. Bus transportation is a much shorter and better monitored process, therefore, a safer process. I respectfully urge Maryland to partner in making every effort to keep children safe.

This proposed school bus transportation tax credit would put school bus transportation in the reach of more parents in the state, keeping children safe, lowering emissions, alleviating traffic, and making otherwise carpool driving adults better able to maintain optimal work schedules.

I urge the committee to vote favorably on SB 528.