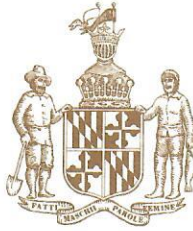


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Budget and Taxation Committee

Education, Business and
Administration Subcommittee

Pensions Subcommittee

Joint Committees

Audit and Evaluation Committee

Children, Youth, and Families

Ending Homelessness

Fair Practices and
State Personnel Oversight

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony of Senator Joanne C. Benson
SB161; State Department of Education Drivers Education and Career and Technical
Education-Funding (Drivers Education and Career Education Act of 2025)
January 22, 2025- 10:30 a.m.

Good Afternoon Chair Guy Guzzone, Vice Chair, Jim Rosapepe, and Budget and Taxation Committee members.

I am Senator Joanne C. Benson, and I am here today to express my strong support for the proposed legislation that aims to include appropriations in the State Department of Education's annual budget bill to fund the Coalition for Public Safety Training in Schools, Inc. in Prince George's County. This funding is crucial for the enhancement of driver education and career and technical education (CTE) programs in our state.

Importance of Driver Education

Driver education is a fundamental component of public safety. Properly trained young drivers are better equipped to navigate our roads safely, reducing the likelihood of accidents and fatalities. The proposed funding will enable the Coalition for Public Safety Training in Schools to provide comprehensive driver education programs that teach students the skills and knowledge necessary to become responsible and safe drivers. This investment in driver education will pay dividends in the form of fewer traffic incidents and a safer community.

Significance of Career and Technical Education

Career and technical education plays a vital role in preparing our students for the workforce. CTE programs offer students the opportunity to gain hands-on experience and practical skills in various trades and professions. By investing in these programs, we are not only providing students with viable career paths but also addressing the workforce needs of our local businesses and industries. The funding for the Coalition for Public Safety Training in Schools will enhance CTE programs, ensuring that students are well-prepared for successful careers.

Annual Evaluation

The requirement for the State Department of Education to hire an independent contractor to conduct an annual evaluation of the funded programs is a prudent measure. This evaluation will provide valuable insights into the effectiveness and impact of the driver education and CTE initiatives, allowing for continuous improvement and accountability.

In conclusion, I urge the committee to support this legislation. The proposed funding for driver education and career and technical education is an investment in the safety, education, and future of our students and communities. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Joanne C. Benson