

Subject: Support for HB1359– Charles County Student Bus Transportation Providers – Provider Displacement

Dear Chairwoman Atterbeary, Vice Chairwoman Wilkins, and Members of the Ways and Means Committee.

My name is Pascale Small, and I am a parent of three Charles County Public Schools scholars. I am writing to express my strong support for HB1359, a crucial bill that ensures the stability and continuity of student transportation services in our county. Reliable and consistent transportation is a cornerstone of student success, and this legislation provides necessary protections for the individuals and companies that have been serving our children for years.

As a parent, I have seen firsthand the invaluable role that our bus drivers and transportation providers play in the daily lives of our children. These individuals do more than just transport our children to and from school—they provide a sense of safety, familiarity, and community. Many of these providers have built relationships with students and families over the years, offering consistency that is critical to our children's well-being. All of these businesses are led by local families and community members who pour into our local economy and county.

HB1359 will require the Charles County Board of Education to provide at least 10 years' notice and hold a public hearing before taking any action that results in the displacement of a long-standing student transportation provider. Additionally, the bill mandates written notice by registered mail at least 5 years before any displacement occurs. This level of transparency and advanced notice is essential for ensuring that transportation providers can adequately prepare for any transitions and that parents and students are not left scrambling due to sudden changes.

Without these protections, we risk disrupting not only the employment of dedicated transportation providers and the community members who drive our children but also the stability of our children's way of getting to school and the ability of our parents to continue going to work. The disruption of transportation affects us all.

By passing HB1359 the Maryland General Assembly will help safeguard the quality and reliability of student transportation in Charles County. I urge you to support this bill to ensure that our students continue to receive the safe, consistent, and trusted transportation services they deserve.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Pascale Small
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