

HB0247 – Favorable (FAV)

Front Line Driving School
45 Waverley Drive
Frederick, MD 21702
mainoffice@frontlinedrivingschool.com
240-615-7092
www.frontlinedrivingschool.com

Jan 24, 2025

Dear Members of the Committee,

I am writing on behalf of Front Line Driving School, to express our support for the HB0247 bill. As a provider of Driver's Education classes in the state of Maryland and SHIP's primary provider, we have seen firsthand how impactful Driver's Education can be on students' lives, and how transformative obtaining a driver's license can be for underprivileged teenagers. Not only does it allow students to achieve a greater sense of stability and independence, for students experiencing homelessness, getting their wait time reduced from 9 months to 3 months can truly make all the difference. We have witnessed how obtaining a license increases these students' chances to pursue both professional and educational opportunities; having reliable transportation is essential and often a necessary prerequisite for achieving their goals.

From a business perspective, this bill would also help make the license-obtaining process much more efficient by allowing students to schedule their in-car classes shortly after completing their 30-hour virtual classroom portion. Currently, due to the 9-month wait time, students sometimes choose to take their in-car sessions many months after their classroom sessions, after most key knowledge from the course has already been forgotten. In other cases, students might complete all necessary in-car hours, but have a significant wait time until they are able to test for their license. Reducing the wait time would allow students to get the most out of their in-car sessions, with all the classroom knowledge still fresh in their minds.

Streamlining the process and making it possible for each step to be completed one after the other would also make it more likely for students to successfully complete the process. We have had cases where SHIP students obtained their permit and took the Driver's Education classroom portion with us, but because they then had to wait 9 months to take their license test, they opted to wait until closer to their MVA date to schedule their in-car classes. But as you can imagine, for homeless individuals whose lives are very unstable, a lot can change in 9 months; unfortunately, some of these students have never returned to take their in-car sessions, and we have not been able to track them down, as in 9 months, these students often change their addresses and/or contact information. If they disconnect before completing the process, they may be faced with starting over elsewhere.

Homeless students already face countless barriers to completing their license process, and passing this bill would be one way to take a weight off their shoulders. On top of the many

struggles they face when it comes to scheduling conflicts and limited transportation to get to our driving school, they should not have to have their license-obtaining process prolonged as well; passing this bill would give these students a more equitable path forward and equally benefit driving schools by making their processes more efficient. With all of this in mind, we respectfully urge the committee to vote in favor of HB0247.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Front Line Driving School