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Judicial Proceedings Committee  
Chair Will Smith Jr.  
2 East Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**SB498 Motor Vehicles - School Buses - Seat Belts**

Hello Chairman Smith and committee members, I am here to ask for your favorable report on SB498 Motor Vehicles - School Buses - Seat Belts

I first testified in support of this bill last year when it passed the House. After I testified, many circumstances have changed that reinforce the urgent need for school bus seatbelts.

I am now a middle school student who rides the school bus daily from my home in Bethesda to my campus in Washington, D.C. I experienced two separate incidents where I not only bumped my head against the back of the seat, but also fell off entirely onto the floor. A recent incident in Howard County involved a school bus rollover, and in August 2024, a tragic accident in Texas claimed the life of a preschooler. These events are heartbreaking reminders that the safety of us kids cannot be compromised. These personal experiences make it clear to me that our current system is failing to protect children during transit.

I am not testifying solely for my own safety. I am speaking out for every school bus rider—present and future. Our generation is the generation of change, and we deserve to ride in buses that are equipped with the necessary safety features to protect us. Children will not be safe on school buses unless they have seatbelts.

In conclusion, I urge you to provide a favorable report on this bill. Thank you for your attention and commitment to the safety of every child in our schools.

In closing, I ask this committee for your favorable report on SB498.