



January 31, 2025

The Honorable William C. Smith Jr. and Members  
Judicial Proceedings Committee  
Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**Re: FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS – SB 498 - Motor Vehicles - School Buses - Seat Belts**

Dear Chair Smith and Members of the Committee:

In its current form, the Maryland School Bus Contractors Association (MSBCA) supports with Amendments – SB 498 – Motor Vehicles - School Buses - Seats Belts. This bill would require new school buses purchased after July 1, 2027, to have seat 3-point belts installed that are accessible to passengers for every seat on the bus. MSBCA requests the addition of amendments offered by Delegate Taveras, on cross filed HB 134. MSBCA can support this bill with the corresponding amendments. Those Amendments requested are:

**AMENDMENT NO. 1**

On page 1, in line 6, after “prohibiting” insert “a criminal prosecution or”.

**AMENDMENT NO 2**

On page 5, in line 33, after the second “OF” insert “A CRIMINAL PROSECUTION OR”

MSBCA serves as the voice of the private school bus companies that contract with local Maryland school systems in 19 of Maryland’s 24 jurisdictions to own and operate the nearly 3,500 contracted school buses that transport Maryland schoolchildren covering over 44 million miles annually across the State.

First and foremost, MSBCA remains committed to the safety of the students they transport and considers it a privilege to do so. The Association also remains committed to the position that the **yellow school bus is by far the safest mode of transporting children to and from school, with or without seat belts**. School buses have been demonstrated as the safest mode of transportation for many years, thanks to the manufacturers' dedication to passenger safety and responsible school bus contractors and their drivers.

Again, MSBCA looks forward to working with the legislators to make Maryland the safest state in the country for our children.

Sincerely,

*Steve Nelson*

Steve Nelson  
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