



Southern Maryland Chapter of the National Coalition of 100 Black Women

**Senate Bill 498: Motor Vehicles – School Buses – Seat Belts**

**Position: Favorable**

January 31, 2025

Chair William Smith and the Honorable members of the Judicial Proceeding Committee thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony supporting Senate Bill 498.

The Southern Maryland Chapter of NCBW, the largest chapter in our state, has many members whose children ride the bus to school. Charles County Public Schools ride over 23,000 students, covering over 34,000 daily miles. St Mary's County Public Schools transports between 1,600 to 1,900 students annually. All members of NCBW have observed students standing up on school buses.

We know there has been significant debate over adding seat belts to school buses. What price are we putting on the lives of our children? Seat belts save lives. We are one accident away from serious injury to our most precious children. California, Florida, Louisiana, New Jersey, New York, and Texas have seat belts on school buses. Let's offer the best protection technology and manufacturing can provide to protect our students.

All Southern Maryland Chapter members of NCBW ask that the Judicial Proceeding Committee provide a favorable vote.