



CHARLES COUNTY SCHOOL BUS CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION

March 3, 2025

Chairwoman Atterbeary, Vice Chairwoman Wilkins, and members of the committee. My name is Jennifer Jordan, owner of D and J Buses for 43 years with 15 full time employees, 4 subs and 1 mechanic located in Bryan's Rd in Charles County servicing Charles County School Public Schools and families.

You may ask...why can't this be addressed in your contract with the school system rather than through legislation? Great question.

While it may seem that contractual agreements should be sufficient to address concerns about "displacement and advance notice", there are several key reasons why in this case legislation is necessary to ensure fairness, transparency, and stability for school bus contractors, our employees, and the families we serve.

- **Contracts Are Controlled by CCPS**

- While Contractors bear the costs (some are reimbursable) including purchasing buses, employing the workforce, operations and servicing the buses – in other words taking all of the risks- Charles County Public Schools, CCPS, dictates the terms and length of our contracts with little input. Bus contractors have little to no leverage in negotiating financial investment protections such as a displacement notice.
- Most neighboring counties school systems offer their contractors a 6-12 year contract.; this period of time covers the financing period of the buses. CCPS currently has a 3 year contract in place at great risk to small businesses.
- Buses purchased by Contractors are Charles County Specific and cannot be used in neighboring jurisdictions or other states. If displaced, these buses would not have the opportunity to benefit the business owner outside of Charles County.
- Many owners have commercial and non-commercial lease agreements to house equipment and host operations in the county adding to our costs and the economy.
- More than 60 local businesses, community and the local economy benefits from school bus contractors.
- Our safety records are the best. Twenty of the 24 (83%) of our Contractors meet or exceed CCPS' own contractor performance evaluation tool. This tool was developed by CCPS Transportation department to evaluate contractor performance.
- Unlike other counties where transportation contracts include long-term job security measures, CCPS has declined to include such provisions, leaving contractors vulnerable to "sudden termination" and leaving all employees vulnerable to unemployment.
- CCPS continues to expand its in-house fleet without warning, despite our repeated requests for clarity and collaboration.

- **Lack of Transparency & Stakeholder Input**

- HB1359 ensures that CCPS must provide public notice and hold a hearing, allowing impacted stakeholders, including parents, employees, and local business partners—to be

part of the conversation.

- **Precedent Exists for Similar Protections**

- In 2017, Maryland passed HB1300/CH0419, which required advance notice for trash collection contractors in Charles County—who also invest heavily in equipment for county services.
- HB1359 follows the same logic as the legislation that provided advance notice for trash collectors in Charles County in 2017.

- **Ensuring Stability for Employees & Families**

- My drivers as well as all drivers, attendants, and support personnel depend on their jobs to provide for their families.
- Without fair notice, they could be abruptly unemployed, causing unnecessary hardship in our community.
- HB1359 ensures predictability for the workforce, helping maintain stability for families who rely on their livelihoods in school transportation.

Conclusion

- This is not about restricting CCPS's ability to make operational decisions—but about ensuring fair notice, transparency, and collaboration.
- Because CCPS has consistently refused to include displacement notice in contracts, legislation is necessary to provide a baseline level of fairness for contractors, employees, and the students we serve.
- HB1359 is a reasonable solution that aligns Charles County with the best practices, protects small businesses, and ensures a stable and reliable student transportation system.
- For these reasons, **I urge a favorable report on HB1359.** Thank you, and I welcome any further questions.

Jennifer Jordan, Owner of D and J Buses

Bryans Rd MD

dandjbuses@gmail.com

