

ARTHUR ELLIS, CPA  
*Legislative District 28*  
Charles County

DEPUTY MAJORITY LEADER

Finance Committee

Vice Chair, Rules Committee

*Senate Chair*

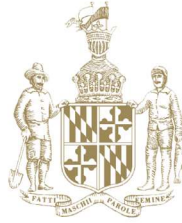
Joint Committee on the  
Management of Public Funds

*Senate Chair*

Joint Committee on  
Workers' Compensation Benefit and  
Insurance Oversight

Senate Chair, Charles County Delegation

Chair, Select Committee Southern  
Maryland



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

*Annapolis Office*  
James Senate Office Building  
11 Bladen Street, Room 301  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
410-841-3616  
800-492-7122 Ext. 3616  
Arthur.Ellis@senate.maryland.gov

*District Office*  
3261 Old Washington Road  
Waldorf, Maryland 20602

Sponsor Written Testimony: Favorable

Senate Bill 0158: Counties – Construction of Sidewalks and Crosswalks – Safe Alternative Routes to Public Schools

February 16, 2026

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

I am writing in support of Senate Bill 526 to protect students on their routes to and from school. Tragically, two elementary school students were killed during their commute walking to school in Maryland, according to an NBC Washington news report in November 2023.<sup>1</sup> Across Maryland, concerned families struggle to find safe alternatives when they are ineligible for transportation services for their children in Maryland. To address these serious issues, Senate Bill 158 would require a county board to prepare and share a public report that identifies areas of the county where a student would be ineligible for transportation services to their school based on distance and pathways of safe alternative routes that the student can use to travel to school. Additionally, the governing body of the county would be required to review the report, construct the sidewalks and crosswalks needed for the safe alternative route identified in the report, and work with other counties as needed to quickly plan and develop alternative routes students may need to use in the other county.

---

<sup>1</sup> Paul Wagner, *2 Children Hit, Killed While Walking to School in Prince George's County Police Say*, NBC4 Washington (Nov. 20, 2023, 4:35 PM), <https://www.nbcwashington.com/news/local/2-children-hit-killed-while-walking-to-school-in-prince-georges-county-police-say/3475397/>.

Unfortunately, the issues causing the 2023 incident of two children dying on their walk to school may not be a mere anomaly. While some people would probably assume that all children would have access to school buses that safely transport them to and from school on time, data shows that many children fall out of reach from school transportation and may even face transportation delays even when they are eligible for public school transportation.<sup>2</sup> One December 2023 report from the Maryland Nonpublic School Transportation Task Force found that many non-public students do not have access to school transportation and recommended a report be created to allow counties to investigate and share possible solutions for best transportation options with those students and their caregivers.<sup>3</sup> One 2023 CBS News report noted that more than 2300 students were ineligible for transportation and that there were three students of students being approached while walking to school, including one incident where two students were robbed at gunpoint while walking home from school.<sup>4</sup> So, Maryland has an issue where students may have to walk long distances, face tardiness, or deal with safety issues while walking to school.

Senate Bill 158 is a critical first step to addressing the safety issues of students who are ineligible for transportation to school. While more can be done to address these issues, this bill would get this important work started by having county boards research alternatives, work together with other counties, create the alternative routes, and publicly share these routes so that all students can get the education they need safely, no matter where in the Maryland area they may live.

Sincerely,



Arthur Ellis, CPA

---

<sup>2</sup> Diana Furchtgott-Roth, *Maryland Regulations Prevent Kids from Getting to School*, Forbes (Sept. 23, 2022, 4:29 PM EDT), (“The popular perception is that most children take buses, with few seats available. In reality, according to the National Household Travel Survey from the U.S. Department of Transportation, 33 percent of school children took the bus to school, 54 percent were driven, and 10 percent walked or biked.”), <https://www.forbes.com/sites/dianafurchtgott-roth/2022/09/23/maryland-regulations-prevent-kids-from-getting-to-school/>; *see also*, Nonpublic Schools Transportation Task Force, *Final Report: MSAR #14844*, Maryland State Department of Education (Dec. 2023), P. 17-18, <https://marylandpublicschools.org/programs/Documents/Operations/Pupil-Transportation/TaskForce/TaskForceRecomendationsReport.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> Nonpublic Schools Transportation Task Force, *Final Report: MSAR #14844*, Maryland State Department of Education (Dec. 2023), P. 17-18, <https://marylandpublicschools.org/programs/Documents/Operations/Pupil-Transportation/TaskForce/TaskForceRecomendationsReport.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> *see also*, Cristina Mendez, *Howard County Parents, Students Push for Policy Reversal on Bus Services*, CBS News (Nov. 16, 2023), <https://www.cbsnews.com/baltimore/news/howard-county-public-schools-grapples-with-new-student-transportation-snafu-maryland/>.