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**SB574 – Charles County – Student Bus Transportation Providers – Provider Displacement  
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
March 11, 2026**

**UNFAVORABLE**

AFSCME Council 3 opposes Senate Bill 574. Senate Bill 574 requires the Charles County Board of Education to provide at least ten years' notice before taking any action that results in the displacement of a private operator who provides student bus transportation services in Charles County. Additionally, the legislation requires the local school system to hold a public hearing on the advisability of the Charles County Board of Education providing the student bus transportation services rather than a private contractor.

AFSCME Council 3 represents approximately 55,000 public service workers at the state, county, and municipal levels of government. AFSCME Council 3 also represents school support staff, including bus drivers and attendants, in certain local school systems across the state. In the Charles County Public School System, our union represents bus drivers and attendants that operate the student transportation system provided by the local school system.

Our union is concerned with the provisions of this legislation, which appear to be without precedent across the state of Maryland. Certain other local school systems across the state operate a mixed fleet of publicly and privately operated student bus transportation systems yet there is no other provision in law that requires ten years notice when a local school system wishes to directly operate their own student bus transportation system. The notice provisions in the legislation will inhibit the local school system's ability to directly operate and manage more student bus transportation services in-house.

Our union believes that local school systems should have the ability to operate student transportation systems in-house with the use of public employees, particularly where the use of public services saves money in contrast to contracting with the private sector. A 2015 study by the Charles County Board of Education found that transportation costs could be lowered on average by 3.3% a year by in-sourcing bus services rather than utilizing private contractors.

AFSCME Council 3 opposes this legislation and is concerned with the precedent this legislation could establish if enacted.

**We respectfully urge the committee to issue an unfavorable report on SB574.**