



March 11, 2026

To: The Honorable Brian Feldman, Chair; The Honorable Cheryl Kagan, Vice Chair
From: Keith Compton President Compton Bus Services, Inc. Charles County MD
Cc: Members, Senate Education, Environment and Energy Committee
Re: Favorable SB574- Charles County – Student Bus Transportation Providers –
Provider
Displacement

Good Afternoon Chairman Feldman Vice Chairwoman Kagan, and members of the committee. My name is Keith Compton, and I am a fourth-generation owner of Compton Bus Services, in Charles County, continuing the legacy of my late father Calvin Compton Jr, who took over from his father in the 70's.

- I am here today **in strong support of SB574**, which simply requests that Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) give adequate notice and public notice of intent to displace our 24 small businesses and our 400 employees if—or more accurately, when— they decide to bring student transportation services in-house.
- There is no dispute that CCPS has the right to transition transportation services in-house. SB574 does not challenge that authority. However, what this bill does seek is a PUBLIC notice – not only to us bus companies, but to Charles Co Government and to you, state funders of CCPS, to our 400 employees, and let's not forget our families and the children we transport several times a day, five days a week.
- The plan to bring bus ownership and services in house has been mentioned in public by CCPS for the last 5 years as they continue to buy their own buses and build their fleet, but no transparency to allow us to prepare for such a decision. So we know it's a possibility, we just don't know when....and we keep buying our buses and serving our county.

Also, Let me mention what this bill does NOT do.....

- This bill has no financial impact to the opposition, it is a bill of “Public Notice” only, allowing for transparency to the public and funders.
- This bill does not dictate the length of our future contract with CCPS.
- This bill does not mandate contract terms.
- This bill does not change current contract performance standards—this bill and CCPS has mechanisms in place to address underperformance or breaches.

Also several studies have been done because of the threat of terminating our services is looming:

Most recently this body through legislation recommended the 2023 Task Force led by Senator Ellis and Delegate Patterson which resulted in best practices, higher wages for our drivers, an 8-hour day, and a multi-year contract, 3 years, instead of annual contracts which

was the practice until 2023. But as mentioned, our buses are purchased on an annual rolling procurement cycle by 6-yr personal loans.

Also, there was a Dec 2016 School Bus Consultant Study and Report which concluded I QUOTE “ In summary, our conclusion argues against undertaking a conversion to a fully in-sourced organization at this time.” End quote. But again school systems and boards have the right to do what they want in procuring student transportation services.

This Committee knows better than I do that Maryland has seen what happens when a School system decides on their own, **without any notice**, to replace their school bus contractors with an out-of-state company at the beginning of a school year. It happened a few years ago, schools were closed for 3 days, and the results were not good.

Maryland is experiencing what happens when a school system that operates their own bus transportation in-house decides on their own to contract for electric buses that are not delivered on time.

The negative costs of these decisions **without notice** are devastating and unfair to taxpayers. It is also very unfair to the bus drivers who depend on our businesses for their livelihood, for most this is their only job.

Our employees are like family, they are family. We have in some instances where we choose to advance them pay, help them find housing, and allow extended sick leave with few substitutes to cover their routes. We are the substitutes, we hop on our buses and make sure our routes are operated safely and efficiently. We pay the price and all costs of running our small businesses that are never seen or talked about.

If CCPS were to move student transportation in-house today, next year or the following year, we would be left personally liable for our 6-year or longer bus loans that we personally assumed in good faith to provide our services. Without adequate notice of displacement, we would be in financial ruins, our employees would be too. With adequate notice, we can plan an exit strategy for all.

This bill is not just about our small businesses—it’s also about our 400 plus employees who rely on us every day for their livelihoods and the students and families we serve.

For these reasons, **I respectfully urge a favorable report on SB574.**

Keith D. Compton
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