

Support for SB574.pdf

Uploaded by: Jennifer Jordan

Position: FAV



CHARLES COUNTY
SCHOOL BUS
CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION

March 9, 2026

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Committee Members,

My name is Jennifer Jordan, owner of D & J Buses, Inc. in Bryans Road and a member of the CCSBCA. Our organization represents 24 small businesses in Charles County—the majority of which are women- and minority-owned—operating 315 buses that transport over 28,000 students daily. I am writing to express our strong support for SB574.

We are reintroducing this "Public Notice" legislation to protect the interests of our companies, taxpayers, state and county funders, and the families who depend on safe student transportation. This "Notice of Displacement" bill is necessary due to the significant personal financial risks involved in our operations:

- Financial Investment: Each bus costs approximately \$160,000, funded through six-year personal loans guaranteed by our homes and personal assets.
- Procurement Cycles: We purchase buses on an annual rolling schedule. Because these vehicles are specified strictly for Charles County, they cannot be operated in neighboring jurisdictions if our contracts are terminated.
- Lack of Transparency: Over the past four years, Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) has increased its in-house fleet from 22 to 69 buses. Despite this growth, there has been no transparent communication regarding the timeline or methodology for shifting operations in-house, leaving our businesses and over 400 employees in a state of uncertainty.

SB574 does not limit the operational authority of CCPS. Instead, it ensures adequate notice to local government, parents, and contractors. This transparency allows for proper future planning, protects local jobs, and ensures continued safe transportation without sudden disruptions.

We remain committed to serving our students and believe this legislation is a reasonable step toward ensuring fairness and security for all parties. We respectfully request a favorable report on SB574 to protect our businesses, our employees, and the taxpayers of Charles County.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best regards,

Jennifer Jordan
D & J Buses, Inc.

SB574 Testimony Duffyv1.pdf

Uploaded by: Joe Roberts

Position: FAV



March 11, 2026

Date: March 11, 2026

To: The Honorable Brian Feldman, Chair; The Honorable Cheryl Kagan, Vice Chair

From: Joe Roberts, JH Duffy Bus Co, Charles Co, MD

Cc: Members, Senate Education, Environment and Energy Committee

Re: Favorable SB574- Charles County – Student Bus Transportation Providers – Provider Displacement

Good afternoon, Chair Feldman and vice Chair Kagan and Committee members, my name is Joe Roberts, and I own James H Duffy Company located at 10535 Berry Rd in Waldorf and I am a member of CCSBCA an organization representing our 24 small Charles County businesses, the majority of which are women- and minority-owned, **in Strong Support of SB574.**

Our organization operates 315 buses, safely transporting over 28,000 students every day. Many of our businesses, spanning two to three generations, take pride in providing safe, reliable transportation that enables educators to focus on student success and learning.

We are bringing this “Public Notice” bill forward again from last session because it represents not only the **best interests of 1- our companies, but also those of 2-our taxpayers, 3-the state and county funders who allocate funds to our educational system, and 4- our families** who every day depend on safe, reliable and efficient school bus transportation for their precious cargo – their children.

By advancing this “Notice of Displacement” legislation, we aim to protect the public and the critical investments made in student transportation and safeguard the resources that support the educational success of our community.

Some simple facts on that investment:

1. All of us bus contractors make significant personal financial investments at the purchase cost of \$160,000 per bus through personal guaranteed through personal loans with banks over 6-years.
2. Each bus is purchased by putting our personal assets as collateral with our banks, our debt can range in the millions of dollars on any given year. Again, our personal loans are made for 6-year periods.
3. **THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT TO KNOW- We buy our buses on an annual rolling procurement schedule, when two buses are retired after 15 years, we buy two new ones, for example.**

4. **IMPORTANT.** I want to emphasize that our buses are purchased and **Spec'd to operate ONLY in Charles County, if terminated, we can't bring our buses to a neighboring county to operate. We have no EQUITY in our businesses.**
5. Without adequate notice, these investments are at serious risk, threatening our businesses, our personal assets, and the livelihoods of more than 400 local bus drivers, attendants, and support staff.

Over the past four years, CCPS has increased their bus fleet from 22 to 69 buses, and has made it clear to the public that their intent is to bring the majority of bus operations in-house over time. They have not shared how, when and why...there is no transparency with us or county government as far as we know.

This lack of communication leaves us very uncertain about our future and the future of our employees...our bus drivers, attendants and mechanics.

As a Contractor, our businesses are personally liable for millions of dollars in bus loans, insurance, workforce, parts, and other expenses—often personally guaranteed by our homes and our personal assets. If CCPS moves student transportation in-house without fair notice, it would cause irreparable financial harm and disrupt the lives of hundreds of employees and their families who depend on these jobs.

SB5754 does not limit CCPS's authority to make operational decisions. It simply provides adequate notice, to our local county government, our parents, and to us, which:

1. Allows contractors to plan for the future and protect jobs.
2. Strengthens the partnership between CCPS and the contractors who serve the communities.

3. It Ensures the continued safe and efficient transportation of students without sudden disruptions.

We remain committed to working with CCPS and the County to serve our students and believe this legislation is a reasonable step toward ensuring fairness, transparency, and security for all parties involved.

In Closing we thank our county and state legislators for your support and respectfully request a favorable report on SB575 to protect tax payers interests, our businesses, our 400 hundred employees, and the families we serve. Thank you for your time & consideration.

Sincerely,
Joe Roberts
jhduffyco@verizon.net
301.643.9093

K Compton Testimony SB574.pdf

Uploaded by: Keith Compton

Position: FAV



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
President
Compton Bus Services, Inc.

Kcompt1@yahoo.com

Testimony SB574 M Koch copy.pdf

Uploaded by: Mark Koch

Position: FAV



**CHARLES COUNTY
SCHOOL BUS
CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION**

Date: March 11, 2026

To: The Honorable Brian Feldman, Chair; The Honorable Cheryl Kagan, Vice Chair

From: Charles County School Bus Contractors Association (CCSBCA) President Mark Koch

Cc: Members, Senate Education, Environment and Energy Committee

Re: **Favorable SB574-** Charles County – Student Bus Transportation Providers – Provider Displacement

The Charles County School Bus Contractors Association (CCSBCA) comprises 24 small businesses, predominantly women and minority-owned, which own and operate 300 buses serving over 28,000 students and their families. Our businesses have ownership that spans two and three generations – we take immense pride in transporting school age students safely and efficiently every day so that the school system can focus on what they do best - learning and student achievement.

SB574 specifically addresses “notice of displacement” to Charles County Bus Contractors **and to the public**, promoting transparency and accountability for all stakeholders. This bill will ensure “prior notification— of at least 6 years—before termination that results in the displacement of a Contractor(s)”. The bill includes provisions for non-performance, so that is not an issue.

It is important to clarify that this bill does not restrict the authority of the Charles County Public School system or the Board of Education to determine and implement changes regarding whether transportation services are insourced or outsourced in the future, they retain that authority without any constraints. It would protect 24 small businesses, including mine, from experiencing personal financial disaster and 400 employees from being displaced without notice.

The primary requirement of this bill is to ensure that any such changes are communicated in advance to us through public notification. This measure would provide timely information to contractors, county government, the state, and families, so that all affected parties are aware of impending changes to student transportation services.

The requested 6-year notification period is consistent with practices in neighboring counties that also utilize school bus contractors and aligns with the typical terms of contractors’ bank loans, 6-year personal bank loans for every bus purchased. Buses are purchased on an annual rolling procurement cycle.

Advance notice, as required by the proposed legislation, is necessary to allow contractors time to plan for the future and to safeguard the security of their employees. This includes more than 400 local bus drivers, attendants, and support personnel whose livelihoods depend on stable and predictable transportation contracts.

This is not a contractual issue, it is notice and an assurance of accountability and transparency so that we cannot be put out of business overnight like a neighboring county experienced. With investments in the hundreds of millions of dollars – 300 buses at \$160,000 per bus not including the facilities infrastructure (lots), the operating costs, vendor contracts, and employee responsibilities, it is within the best interest of all parties involved to require CCPS and BOE to provide public notice to us, our employees, funders, taxpayers, and especially the families.

The proposed legislation is crucial for ensuring stability and long-term planning not only for the School Bus Contractors but also for the County's school system, providing mutual benefits and a stronger foundation for collaboration.

Charles County School Bus Contractors remain committed to working together, and we believe this legislation would enhance that partnership by bringing accountability, transparency, and security to all parties involved. **We urge your support for SB574.**

Thank you,
Mark Koch
CCSBCA-President

SB574 Favorable Written Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Marty Lostrom

Position: FAV



March 9, 2026

The Honorable Brian Feldman
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Senate Office Building, Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: FAVORABLE– SB 574 - Charles County - Student Bus Transportation Providers - Provider Displacement

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland School Bus Contractors Association (MSBCA) supports Senate Bill 574. MSBCA serves as the voice of the private school bus companies that contract with local Maryland school systems in 20 of Maryland's 24 jurisdictions. MSBCA members own and operate over 3,600, or 51%, of the school buses transporting school children across our state. MSBCA contracted school bus routes travel over 58 million miles each year while remaining fully committed to the safety of the students we transport.

SB 574 specifically addresses notice of “displacement” for the 24 student transportation businesses, mostly women and minority owned, that have provided student transportation to Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) for more than 100 years. **SB 574 simply provides for timely notification, at least 6 years of operational changes that displace current Bus Contractors.** This gives all Bus Contractors, who personally purchase and mortgage expensive school buses the time to plan and maintain security for their more than 400 employees and families.

What SB 574 is not about is changes to existing contracts, contract clauses like severability for cause, or mandating the duration of contracts. Those terms remain as agreed upon between the Contractor and the School District.

MSBCA also supports Amendments requested by the Bus Contractors and the Charles County Delegation, reducing the termination notice from 10 years to 6 years and the removal of the buy-out clause.

The proposed legislation is crucial for ensuring stability and long-term planning not only for the School Bus Contractors but also for the County’s school system, providing mutual benefits and a stronger foundation for collaboration. **We know that the Charles County School Bus Contractors remain committed to working together, and we believe this legislation would enhance that partnership by bringing fairness, transparency, security, and respect to all parties involved.**

Thank you for your time and consideration of SB 574.

Sincerely,

Steve Nelson

Steve Nelson
President

Martha “Marty” Lostrom

Martha “Marty” Lostrom
Executive Director

SB574 Testimony - Swann.pdf

Uploaded by: ADAM DYSON

Position: FWA



March 11, 2026

Good afternoon, Chair Feldman and vice Chair Kagan and Committee members, my name is Adam Dyson, and I own Swann Transportation Inc located at 5780 Crain Hwy and I am a member of CCSBCA an organization representing our 24 small Charles County businesses, the majority of which are women- and minority-owned, **in Strong Support of SB574.**

Our organization operates 315 buses, safely transporting over 28,000 students every day. Many of our businesses, spanning two to three generations, take pride in providing safe, reliable transportation that enables educators to focus on student success and learning.

We are bringing this “Public Notice” bill forward again from last session because it represents not only the **best interests of 1- our companies, but also those of 2-our taxpayers, 3-the state and county funders who allocate funds to our educational system, and 4- our families** who every day depend on safe, reliable and efficient school bus transportation for their precious cargo – their children.

By advancing this “Notice of Displacement” legislation, we aim to protect the public and the critical investments made in student transportation and safeguard the resources that support the educational success of our community.

Some simple facts on that investment:

1. All of us bus contractors make significant personal financial investments at the purchase cost of \$160,000 per bus through personal guaranteed through personal loans with banks over 6-years.
2. Each bus is purchased by putting our personal assets as collateral with our banks, our debt can range in the millions of dollars on any given year. Again, our personal loans are made for 6-year periods.
3. **THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT TO KNOW- We buy our buses on an annual rolling procurement schedule, when two buses are retired after 12 years, we buy two new ones, for example.**
4. **IMPORTANT.** I want to emphasize that our buses are purchased and **Spec'd to operate ONLY in Charles County, if terminated, we can't bring our buses to a neighboring county to operate. We have no EQUITY in our businesses.**
5. Without adequate notice, these investments are at serious risk, threatening our businesses, our personal assets, and the livelihoods of more than 400 local bus drivers, attendants, and support staff.

Over the past four years, CCPS has increased their bus fleet from 22 to 69 buses, and has

made it clear to the public that their intent is to bring the majority of bus operations in-house over time. They have not shared how, when and why...there is no transparency with us or county government as far as we know.

This lack of communication leaves us very uncertain about our future and the future of our employees...our bus drivers, attendants and mechanics.

As a Contractor, our businesses are personally liable for millions of dollars in bus loans, insurance, workforce, parts, and other expenses—often personally guaranteed by our homes and our personal assets. If CCPS moves student transportation in-house without fair notice, it would cause irreparable financial harm and disrupt the lives of hundreds of employees and their families who depend on these jobs.

SB5754 does not limit CCPS's authority to make operational decisions. It simply provides adequate notice, to out local county government, our parents, and to us ,which:

1. Allows contractors to plan for the future and protect jobs.
2. Strengthens the partnership between CCPS and the contractors who serve the communities.

3. It Ensures the continued safe and efficient transportation of students without sudden disruptions.

We remain committed to working with CCPS and the County to serve our students and believe this legislation is a reasonable step toward ensuring fairness, transparency, and security for all parties involved.

In Closing we thank our county and state legislators for your support and respectfully request a favorable report on SB575 to protect taxpayers interests, our businesses, our 400 hundred employees, and the families we serve. Thank you for your time & consideration.

On behalf of:

Alpert Bus Service, L.L.C

BJ's Transportation, L.L.C

Buck & Sons Bus Service, L.L.C

Celestine C. Dyson, Inc.

Dyson Bus Service, Inc.

Dyson Trucking, Inc.

Compton Bus Service, Inc.

D&J Buses, Inc.

Dink's Bus Service, Inc.

G&M Transportation, Inc.

G. Wade Compton, Inc.

H&H Bus Service, Inc.

H.O. Sheff & Sons, L.L.C

Nannie's Bus Co., L.L.C

Helen E. Keller

Keller III Bus Service, Inc.

Keller Transportation, Inc.

James H. Duffy Company

James H. Stone Jr., L.L.C

P&C Dunnington, Inc.

Ruth E. Koch, Inc.

Koch Trucking, Inc.

Stanley Bus Company, Inc.

Swann Transportation, Inc.

SB574 AFSCME Council 3 Testimony_UNF.pdf

Uploaded by: Christian Gobel

Position: UNF



1410 Bush Street (Suite A)
Baltimore, MD 21230
Phone: 410-547-1515
Email: info@afscmemd.org

Patrick Moran – President

**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.

SB 574 (2026) opposition testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Eric Schwartz

Position: UNF



Maria V. Navarro, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Office of the Superintendent
301-934-7223
Fax: 301-932-6651

Testimony in OPPOSITION to
Senate Bill 574
Charles County – Student Bus Transportation Providers – Provider Displacement

On behalf of the Board of Education of Charles County, I urge this Committee to issue an unfavorable report on Senate Bill 574. Simply put, this bill represents bad public policy. The bill would mandate the privatization of public services and promote the interest of private companies without concern for fiscal responsibility and to the detriment of public employees. Nowhere are the best interests of the public addressed in the bill. Rather, this is a bill solely intended to promote the interests of private bus contractors.

Charles County Public Schools currently balances the use of private providers and system-operated buses to meet the transportation needs of the students in the county. Currently, approximately 80% of the services are provided through private contractors. As transportation costs continue to rise from time to time, Charles County Public Schools may determine that the balance may need to shift to promote fiscal responsibility. Every dollar spent on rising transportation costs comes directly out of other necessary programs within the school system budget.

A 2015 independent study of the school system's transportation program concluded at the time that the school system could save up to 3.3% of its costs if services were to be brought in-house. At the time of the study, all services were provided by private contractors. Since then, the school system has purchased some buses and has operated in a more fiscally balanced manner.

Senate Bill 574 would lock in the current structure for the next ten years, regardless of rising costs and regardless of other factors that are simply unforeseeable. The bill fails to account for cost savings that might accrue from a more balanced approach to transportation services. Additionally, the bill would establish a monopoly for those private companies that would no longer have to compete with the school system's own potentially more cost-effective program. Negotiations of future contracts would become completely one-sided, dominated by private contractors who would use Senate Bill 574 to guarantee additional profits.

Senate Bill 574 goes so far as to mandate renewal of contracts that expire unless cause can be shown for non-renewal. It is simply against public policy to require cause to be shown before ending a contract that expires under its own conditions. By doing so, Senate Bill 574 in a sense mandates contracts that can never expire without cause, and it guarantees contracts with specific private companies regardless of other, better options that may be available.

On top of the practical costs of implementing this mandate, the bill represents a terrible, precedent-setting approach to the provision of public services in the state. Maryland has always been and continues to be a leader in the protections of public employment. Obviously, there are circumstances where the private sector plays a supporting role in the provision of public services. But balance is the key, and removing the ability of a publicly-elected board of education in making fiscally responsible decisions is not appropriate.

I urge this Committee to issue an unfavorable report on Senate Bill 574. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Maria V. Navarro, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

SB 574 - Education - Charles County - Student Bus

Uploaded by: Mary Pat Fannon

Position: UNF



PSSAM
Public School Superintendents' Association
OF MARYLAND

Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director
1217 S. Potomac Street
Baltimore, MD 21224
410-935-7281
marypat.fannon@pssam.org

BILL: SB 574

TITLE: Charles County - Student Bus Transportation Providers - Provider Displacement

DATE: March 11, 2026

POSITION: Unfavorable

COMMITTEE: Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

CONTACT: Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director, PSSAM

The Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland (PSSAM), on behalf of all twenty-four public school superintendents, **opposes** Senate Bill 574.

This legislation requires the Charles County Board of Education to provide at least 10 years' notice and hold a public hearing before taking any action that results in displacement of a person that has been providing student bus transportation services in Charles County; it also requires the Board to provide written notice at least 2 years before the displacement of a person that has been providing student bus transportation services.

PSSAM rarely weighs in on local legislation but due to the far-reaching implications of this legislation, **we strongly oppose this bill**. Beyond the financial implications, this bill sets a dangerous precedent for the management of public services in Maryland school districts. Stripping a publicly elected board of education of its ability to make fiscally responsible decisions is neither appropriate nor in the best interest of Maryland's students, employees, or taxpayers.

This bill would create unfortunate public policy by mandating the privatization of certain services, namely, prioritizing the interests of private transportation companies over fiscal responsibility and stewardship of public funds to education. The bill does nothing to address the best interests of the public; instead, it is designed solely to benefit private bus contractors.

A 2015 independent study of Charles County's school system's transportation program found that bringing services in-house could reduce costs by up to 3.3%. At that time, all transportation services were outsourced to private contractors. Since then, the school system has begun purchasing its own buses, resulting in a more financially balanced operation, but 80% of transportation services are still provided by private contractors.

Senate Bill 574 would lock the current structure in place for the next ten years, disregarding potential cost increases and unforeseen factors. As costs fluctuate, the school system must retain the flexibility to be fiscally responsible. This legislation expressly prohibits the school system from realizing any savings that could result from a more flexible approach. And, it creates a monopoly for private companies, eliminating competition with the school system's potentially more cost-effective transportation program.

For these reasons, PSSAM **opposes** Senate Bill 574 and requests an **unfavorable** report.

Written Testimony SB 574 – Charles County – Studen

Uploaded by: Matthew Girardi

Position: UNF



Statement of the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 689
SB 574 –Charles County – Student Bus Transportation Providers – Provider Displacement
March 11th, 2026
Unfavorable

TO: The Honorable Brian J. Feldman and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

FROM: Matthew Girardi, Political & Communications Director, ATU Local 689

As I wrote last year, SB 574 is of great interest to ATU Local 689, however, this time, the Union strongly urges the Education, Energy and the Environment Appropriations Committee to vote against this bill. As committee members may remember, last year, Charles County’s Senate Delegation also brought this bill to you and we were assured that the bill’s intent was around protecting jobs. In response, we added a number of commonsense changes to center the bill around workers, not a few contracting companies and their owners. None of those were reflected nor do we now believe there was any intent to. Passing this bill would stifle progress for workers, parents, and our young scholars in Charles County. It must not pass.

At Local 689, we represent over 15,000 transit workers and retirees throughout the Washington DC Metro Area performing many skilled transportation crafts for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), MetroAccess, Charles County School Bus, DASH, and DC Streetcar among others. Our union helped turn low-wage, exploitative transit jobs into transit careers. We became an engine for the middle-class of this region.

Today, in Charles County, the vast majority of school bus workers are employed by 17 private contractors hired by CCPS. The CCPS school bus system is fairly unique in this region, with most school systems either providing transportation in-house or with far fewer, but larger contractors. The Charles County School Bus Contractors Association (CCSBCA) was formed and registered to collectively represent the interests of these private companies in their negotiations with CCPS.

Unfortunately, in these negotiations, CCPS has set specific wage rate tables, benefit amounts and even specific workplace rules and regulations for the contracted workforce, all without the input and participation of employees. School bus workers and the unions that represent them have not had a meaningful seat at the table for any negotiations that affect their wages and working conditions.

Nearly 200 school bus workers fought hard and overcame incredible pressure to form unions at 9 different school bus contractors. They joined ATU Local 689 because nearly 1000 of our members and retirees call Charles County their home. Still, any true negotiations have been largely lacking with many contractors, years later.

Let us be clear: contractors must not be allowed to keep wages low, provide inadequate benefits, keep out unions, and then claim their workers’ livelihoods are their priority in an attempt to prevent those jobs from being brought in-house by CCPS. Due to this, we believe that SB 574 as presently constructed should not go through.

The contractors of the CCSBCA understandably want to avoid bus services being brought in-house so they can preserve the status quo. However, that status quo is and has been unacceptable for the people they employ. If the

purpose of this bill is truly to enhance job security and dignity, Local 689 urges substantial amendment to ensure that this body passes a bill that is truly protective of jobs that provide living wages, fair benefits, and dignity to each and every worker.

Specifically, we gladly offer this committee two alternative routes to improve this bill. The first way would be to mandate that any jobs protected in this bill would only apply to contractors who have recognized the Union and concluded their first collective bargaining agreement. The second would be by mandating that any jobs at CCPS in-house bus services would have to give first priority in hiring to any former school bus contractor worker and that their previous years of service would be honored by CCPS. Either would accomplish the stated goals of protecting Charles County school bus drivers in their drive for job security and dignity. Without them, the Union is highly skeptical of the bill.

The Union thanks this committee for considering our views and urges this committee to vote down SB 574.

SB 574 - Oppose - Charles Bus Notice.pdf

Uploaded by: Sam Mathias

Position: UNF

BILL: Senate Bill 574
TITLE: Charles County – Student Bus Transportation Providers – Provider Displacement
HEARING DATE: March 11, 2026
POSITION: UNFAVORABLE
COMMITTEE: Education, Energy, and the Environment
CONTACT: Sam Mathias, Legal & Policy Director (smathias@mabe.org)

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE), representing all the state’s local boards of education, **opposes Senate Bill 574, Charles County – Student Bus Transportation Providers – Provider Displacement**. This bill would mandate the privatization of public services and effectively create a preferred vendor status by restricting a school system’s ability to transition services or pursue new competitive procurement options.

The 24 school districts in Maryland each depend on the ability to make sound fiscal decisions based on local needs. Transportation expenses have increased considerably this decade, and local school districts are best positioned to address budget concerns and to determine the necessary balance between system-operated vehicles and private provider means of transportation.

The needs and uses of public school transportation systems are dynamic, and local boards must be able to adequately address and finance such shifts in their annual budgets. This legislation would mandate contractual renewal guidelines and potentially diminish cost savings by eliminating a competitive bidding process. Although the bill applies only to one county, the precedent it sets regarding the balance between private providers and school system transportation services raises broader concerns for school systems statewide.

Senate Bill 574 also requires that contracts be renewed upon expiration unless a valid reason is provided for non-renewal. This is contrary to good public policy, which generally allows contracts to expire and does not create an additional onus for a school system — a steward of public funds — to justify why a contract should not continue once it expires on its agreed-upon terms. It risks creating a monopoly for private transportation providers at the expense of a school system’s operational flexibility, eliminating the ability of such a system to find something more efficient or cost-effective for transporting students. It runs contrary to standard public procurement practices that rely on competitive bidding and periodic reassessment of contracts.

For these reasons, MABE respectfully requests an unfavorable report on Senate Bill 574.

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Position: INFO



Charles County Government

CHARLES COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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Amanda M. Stewart, Ed.D.

Deborah E. Hall, CPA
Acting County Administrator

March 11, 2026

Bill: Senate Bill 574 Charles County - Student Bus Transportation Providers - Provider Displacement
Position: LETTER OF INFORMATION
Committee: Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment

Dear Chairman Feldman, Vice Chairwoman Kagan and Members:

On behalf of the County Commissioners for Charles County, this letter is to provide information for Senate Bill 574, that concerns notice of displacement of school bus transportation providers in Charles County, Maryland. It aims to protect private contractors who currently provide school bus transportation for the Charles County Board of Education from being replaced by the school system without notice.

The Board of County Commissioners provided an opportunity for Charles County Public Schools and representatives of the private school bus contractors to discuss the bill at their recent meeting on Tuesday, March 3, 2026. A recording of that meeting may be found at <https://reflect-charlescountymd.cablecast.tv/CablecastPublicSite/show/1646?site=1> at the 2 hour and 50 minute mark. After a robust conversation, it was determined that the bus contractors were not opposed to reducing the notice provision from ten (10) years to six (6) years. Additionally, Ms. Sue Greer, Esq., the contractors' representative, stated that the "buyout" language found at 7-811(C)(2)(I) was not needed.

Despite these concessions on behalf of the contractors, CCPS remains vehemently opposed, and the Board of Commissioners believes there are legitimate challenges with the bill as presented. While SB 574 appears intended to protect existing student bus transportation providers in Charles County, its provisions would impose constraints on the Board of Education that could ultimately hinder the school system's ability to operate efficient and responsive transportation services.

The Board of Commissioners sincerely appreciates the contractors' desire to have notice of displacement by the Board of Education. We strongly encourage both parties to continue to negotiate in good faith for a longer-term contract that meets the needs of the school system, the private contractors and most importantly, the school aged children of Charles County who need and deserve safe and predictable transportation to and from school.

Sincerely,

A blue ink signature of Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq., consisting of stylized initials and a surname.

Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq., President
County Commissioners of Charles County