



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Official Testimony in Support of SB 574: Charles County – Student Bus Transportation
Providers – Provider Displacement**

Charles County Senate Delegation

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

SB 574 is designed to provide transparency, fairness, and stability for private student transportation providers in Charles County who currently partner with the Board of Education to transport students safely to and from school.

SB 574 establishes clear procedures that must be followed before the Charles County Board of Education displaces an existing private transportation provider. Specifically, the bill requires advance notice and a public hearing before any decision is made to replace a private provider with services operated directly by the Board of Education or another entity. The bill also creates meaningful timelines for notice and transition, including a long-term planning requirement before displacement occurs.

These safeguards are reasonable and necessary. The school bus contractors often invest substantial resources in vehicles, maintenance, facilities, insurance, and personnel. Abrupt termination of contracts or sudden policy changes can jeopardize small businesses, disrupt employees' livelihoods, and create instability in the transportation system that thousands of students depend on each day.

SB 574 ensures that the public can evaluate the educational, financial, and operational implications of altering the current transportation model. The public hearing requirement allows parents, workers, contractors, and taxpayers to participate in decisions that affect student safety.

SB 574 supports stability in the student transportation system. Reliable transportation is essential to students attendance, safety, and overall educational success.

Thoughtful decision-making benefits all of Charles County, and for these reasons, we request a favorable committee report on SB 547.