

# MARYLAND CENTER for SCHOOL SAFETY

<b>Bill:</b>	House Bill 110	<b>Date:</b>	February 3, 2026
<b>Title:</b>	Motor Vehicles - School Buses - Seat Belts	<b>Committee:</b>	Environment and Transportation
<b>Position:</b>	Favorable	<b>Contact:</b>	Kimberly Buckheit <a href="mailto:kim.buckheit1@maryland.gov">kim.buckheit1@maryland.gov</a> 443-902-0622

On behalf of the Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS), thank you for the opportunity to submit this letter of support for House Bill 110.

MCSS works to advance policies and practices that strengthen student safety across all learning environments, including during transportation to and from school. House Bill 110 reflects a thoughtful, forward-looking approach to student transportation safety by combining safety education, modernized equipment standards, and legal clarity to ensure effective implementation.

Beginning July 1, 2030, the bill requires all newly registered school buses in Maryland to be equipped with three-point seat belts. To ensure these upgrades are effective, the bill also mandates student instruction on proper seat belt use. Importantly, HB 110 includes a no-liability provision for operators, schools, and municipalities—addressing a key operational concern and protecting drivers during implementation.

While Maryland's school buses are generally safe, side-impact and rollover crashes remain a risk. Kristin Poland of the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) has noted that unrestrained students are often thrown from their seats during such incidents, whereas properly worn three-point belts keep occupants within the protective seating compartment.

House Bill 110 implements a comprehensive approach by pairing equipment upgrades with required seat belt education, ensuring that safety hardware is supported by the instruction needed for consistent, effective use. By applying the seat belt requirement to newly purchased buses after July 1, 2030, the bill takes a practical, phased approach that allows school systems to integrate this enhancement into existing fleet replacement cycles while advancing a clear safety standard.

By adopting House Bill 110, Maryland aligns with evolving national safety standards and best practices identified by transportation stakeholders and safety experts. Several states already require seat belts on new school buses, with districts reporting that these restraints provide both enhanced crash protection and a noticeable reduction in student misbehavior. This data-informed legislation represents a proactive, layered approach to student safety, ensuring Maryland's fleet meets the benchmarks established by national transportation experts while fostering a more controlled environment for drivers.

Thank you again for taking the time to consider the information shared above, and MCSS respectfully requests that the committee give House Bill 110 a favorable report.

