

**BILL:** House Bill 110  
**TITLE:** Motor Vehicles- School Buses – Seat Belts  
**HEARING DATE:** February 5, 2026  
**POSITION:** UNFAVORABLE  
**COMMITTEE:** Environment & Transportation  
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The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE), representing all of the State’s local boards of education, **respectfully opposes House Bill 110, Motor Vehicles – School Buses – Seat Belts**. MABE greatly appreciates the underlying principle of this legislation in support of the safe transport of students on school buses. But the magnitude of the unfunded mandates contemplated by this legislation outweighs the modest and unproven benefits to student safety that it would accomplish.

HB 110 establishes a program regarding school bus safety education and the proper use of seat belts on school buses and requires all school buses purchased on or after July 1, 2030, to be equipped with three-point seat belts.

Existing federal and engineering standards already make school buses among the safest forms of student transportation. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, large school buses are heavier and distribute the force of a crash differently than other vehicles, contributing to safer travel for students. Compartmentalization (the close spacing of seating) further protects students during everyday travel. By contrast, school buses weighing 10,000 pounds or less are required by federal law to be equipped with seat belts as they are lighter vehicles that lack the inherently safer construction of heavier buses.

Despite these existing safety protections, HB 110 would impose a significant fiscal burden and constraints on local decision-making due to a statewide mandate. In a fiscal note for the prior iteration of this bill in 2025, the Maryland State Department of Education estimates school districts spending an additional \$10,000 per school bus to be equipped with seat belts.

Beyond cost, the bill raises practical implementation concerns for daily school operations. The use of seat belts on school buses raises logistical challenges, particularly concerning younger students who may require assistance with buckling and unbuckling their seat belts. This could potentially create delays in getting on and off buses, leading to disruptions in the daily transportation schedules and increased operational complexity for school systems.

MABE's opposition to House Bill 110 is grounded in a strong commitment to student safety and the belief that current school bus design and safety requirements already achieve a very high standard of protection against serious injuries to students being transported to and from school.

For these reasons, MABE opposes HB 110 and **respectfully requests an unfavorable report.**