



HB0110 – MOTOR VEHICLES – SCHOOL BUSES – SEAT BELTS

February 5, 2026

ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORTATION

OPPOSE

Grace Wilson, Director of Legislation & Policy (410.440.1758)

Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) opposes **HB0110 - Motor Vehicles - School Buses**. This bill requires the public school safety education program to include student instruction concerning school bus safety and the proper use of seat belts on school buses. Additionally, the bill requires that every school bus purchased on or after July 1, 2030, and registered in the State be equipped with a three-point seat belt for each seat that are accessible to passengers. Furthermore, the failure of a school bus operator to ensure that an occupant of a school bus wearing a seatbelt may not be the basis of a criminal prosecution or a civil action for damages against the school bus operator or a school, school district, or municipality.

AACPS opposes legislation proposing new unfunded safety mandates including seatbelts on school buses. Local boards of education are responsible for providing funding for the transportation of students within their school system. Over the years, local school systems' responsibilities for transporting students have significantly increased due to additional costs associated with transporting special education, nonpublic placement, and homeless students. Operational expenses associated with fuel costs and labor shortages have also contributed to increased expenditures. Although the State provides some funding for transportation, the funding does not increase sufficiently from year to year to cover increasing enrollments as well as the increasing costs of obtaining and maintaining school buses.

This bill imposes a significant unfunded safety mandate on local school systems. Buses purchased by AACPS and our contractors are required to be equipped with lap and shoulder straps in the first five rows to accommodate the anticipated increased enrollment of three- and four-year-old students. Buses fully equipped with seat belts cost an additional \$16,000 per bus. AACPS anticipates that this mandate will result in an additional \$36,000 increased annual costs for AACPS to purchase school buses and an additional \$288,000 in annual contractual cost, as local school systems will likely bear the increase costs of purchasing school buses for school bus contractors. Accordingly, AACPS respectfully requests an **UNFAVORABLE** committee report on HB0110.