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The Honorable William C. Smith Jr., Chairman  
and Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

**RE: SUPPORT SB-91**

I am the Maryland Legislative Director for the Transportation Division of the International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Worker's (SMART). We are the largest rail labor union in North America. Our members in Maryland are employees of CSX, Norfolk Southern Railway, Amtrak, Bombardier (MARC Service) and the Canton Railroad and work as conductors, engineers, switchmen, trainmen, utility persons and yardmasters. Our members operate freight and passenger trains that travel throughout the State.

My position as Legislative Director within our organization is first and foremost to seek to ensure our members have a safe work environment. In that vein, I urge your committee to support SB-91, "*Criminal Law - Assault of a Public Transportation Operator - Penalties.*"

We all recognize the importance of the vital public service this additional class of employees being added to current law through this legislation provide to the public. However, statistics show that these employees are increasingly being subjected to assaults as the number of reported assaults against them over the past several years continues to climb.

With the concern for the environment, the high cost of personal transportation and the fluctuation of fuel prices, the use of public transit is growing. In fact, in recent years, excluding this period of a pandemic, the United States has experienced the highest public transit ridership in the last 60 years. This is a good thing for our state and public transit should be promoted to grow our public transit systems even further.

What we don't need is the negative publicity over the recently increasing rates of crime experienced in the systems. We do need a strong deterrent to prevent these incidents from ever occurring. We believe SB-91 could serve as this deterrent and we therefore urge your committee to give this legislation a favorable report.

Sincerely,

Lawrence E. Kasecamp  
MD State Legislative Director  
SMART Transportation Division