

# **Testimony In Support of SB 448 School Transportati**

Uploaded by: Ceruolo, Rich

Position: FAV

February 8, 2021

Maryland Senate  
11 Bladen St.  
Annapolis, MD. 21401

**In Support of SB 448 / HB 72: Local Boards of Education - School Transportation Vehicles**

Members of the Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee.

As the parent of a child with disabilities, I support giving local boards of education greater options for providing transportation to and from school buildings and day care centers. Growing up in New England we did not live on a school route that was not accessible by our local school system's buses. I was a passenger in one of these types of vehicles for a couple of years as a young student.

In times like these, logistical challenges surrounding education are a hot topic of debate. And as we prepare to get our children back into school buildings full time this Fall, alternative transportation vehicles may be key pieces to the transportation puzzle.

As long as a qualifying vehicle meets safety standards, is clean and is driven by a certified adult driver, these types of vehicles may be instrumental in acting as the keystone and solution to many of the questions surrounding the transportation of school students in the coming months and years.

We fully support any bill that brings more equity, fairness and opportunities for increased access to school transportation options for all Maryland students.

Please return a favorable report for SB 448 / HB 72.

Thank you for your time and your consideration of my testimony today.

Mr. Richard Ceruolo  
Parent and Advocate for real, systemic change to our education system.  
Parent Advocacy Consortium

**SB 448 transportation vehicles PSSAM Support.pdf**

Uploaded by: Fannon, Mary Pat

Position: FAV



BILL: SB 448 - County Boards of Education - Student Transportation - Vehicles  
DATE: February 11, 2021  
POSITION: **Support**  
COMMITTEE: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs  
CONTACT: Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director

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This bill authorizes a county board of education to provide transportation for specified public school students using a vehicle other than a Type I or Type II school vehicle when a school bus cannot reasonably be provided. These students include (1) preschool-age students; (2) students with disabilities; (3) homeless youth; (4) children in foster care; (5) students without access to school buses; (6) students in a nonpublic school placement; (7) students in dual enrollment programs or work programs or other educational programs based off the school campus. A county board of education may provide transportation to a different student group, as well, through a written determination by the board.

The Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland (PSSAM), which represents all twenty-four local school superintendents, **supports Senate Bill 448.**

As indicated in last year's fiscal note, local school systems pay between \$448 per pupil in Frederick County, to over \$1,184 in Garrett County on transporting students. The current law requiring all school transportation via Type I and Type II vehicles or taxicabs does not adequately recognize the geographic diversity of our state. In most Local Education Agency (LEA), these modes of transportation are sufficient, but for certain populations of students in more rural areas this requirement comes at a significant cost that could otherwise be invested in the classroom. This is a difficulty made worse by the national shortage of bus drivers.

While COMAR does allow for school systems to request a waiver from the State Superintendent of Schools to use alternate vehicles, those alternatives are only permitted in very limited circumstances. Last year's fiscal note also indicated that the drivers of these vehicles would not receive a criminal background check, which is inaccurate. Any volunteer, contractor, or in this case, a driver of a non-Type I and Type II vehicle would be required to go through the required fingerprint and background processes.

This legislation would make other viable modes of transportation available to local school systems, allowing us to rededicate school bus drivers to cover full routes within our districts, and the flexibility to deal with the transportation needs of special populations, especially our most vulnerable students. For the reasons stated above, PSSAM **supports Senate Bill 448** and urges a favorable committee report.

# **AACPS SB448 Transportation Flexibility SUPP 2.11.2**

Uploaded by: Ortiz, Jeanette

Position: FAV



## SB448 COUNTY BOARDS OF EDUCATION - STUDENT TRANSPORTATION - VEHICLES

February 11, 2021

EDUCATION, HEALTH, AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

### SUPPORT

Jeanette Ortiz, Esq., Legislative & Policy Counsel (410.703.5352)

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Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) supports **SB448 County Boards of Education - Student Transportation - Vehicles**. This bill authorizes a county board of education to provide transportation for specified public school students to and from school using a vehicle other than a Type I or Type II school vehicle when a school vehicle cannot reasonably be provided.

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) generally requires Type I and Type II school vehicles to be used to transport students to and from school and school related activities when local school system sponsored transportation services are provided. However, MSDE does provide exceptions in some specific instances.

Over the years, local school systems' responsibilities for transporting students have significantly expanded due to additional costs associated with the transportation of special education, nonpublic placement, and homeless students. SB448 provides needed flexibility in transporting eligible students. It is not always feasible, practicable, possible, or economical to utilize a Type I or Type II school bus vehicle in all instances. This legislation provides some relief for local school systems when the use of a conventional school bus cannot reasonably be provided. SB448 could also provide some relief to the ongoing bus driver shortage being felt by local school systems. While it is difficult to quantify, this legislation could result in cost savings in instances when a vehicle other than a Type I or Type II school bus vehicle is utilized.

Accordingly, AACPS respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE** committee report on SB448.

# **SB 448.School Bus Flexibility.pdf**

Uploaded by: Woolums, John

Position: FAV

**BILL:** Senate Bill 448  
**TITLE:** County Boards of Education - Student Transportation - Vehicles  
**POSITION:** SUPPORT  
**DATE:** February 11, 2021  
**COMMITTEE:** Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs  
**CONTACT:** John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) supports Senate Bill 448 to authorize local school systems to provide transportation to and from school for public school students on a vehicle other than a school bus.

MABE supports this bill because it will provide much needed flexibility for local school systems to more efficiently and cost-effectively transport students using vehicles other than school buses.

Local school systems are also requesting the discretion to utilize smaller vehicles than traditional school buses in order to benefit the educational needs of students. The bill specifies that this new option will apply to the transportation of (1) preschool-age students; (2) students with disabilities; (3) homeless youth; (4) children in foster care; (5) students without access to school buses; (6) students in a nonpublic special education school placement; or (7) students in dual enrollment programs or work programs or other educational programs based off the school campus.

Importantly, the bill ensures the continued focus on student safety by requiring that the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), in consultation Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA), to adopt regulations establishing minimum vehicle and driver safety standards for the other modes of transportation provided for under this legislation. On behalf of local boards of education, MABE greatly appreciates the balanced approach of this legislation to provide greater flexibility while assuring that statewide standards will govern the safe transport of students at all times.

Again, MABE believes that the flexibility provided by this bill will greatly benefit school systems in meeting the educational needs of individual and small groups of students through safe and cost-effective options to using school buses in all circumstances.

For these reasons, MABE requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 448.

# **SB 448 - Student Transportation Vehicles - FWA - D**

Uploaded by: Dove, Tina

Position: FWA

Testimony in Support with Amendments to Senate Bill 448  
County Boards of Education—Student Transportation—Vehicles

Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee  
February 11, 2021  
11:00 am

Tina N. Dove, M.Ed.  
Government Relations

The Maryland State Education Association is in support, with amendments, of Senate Bill 448, legislation that would authorize county boards of education to utilize vehicles other than school buses to transport certain students under specified circumstances to and from school.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our 896,837 students for careers and jobs of the future. MSEA also represents 39 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3 million-member National Education Association (NEA).

MSEA understands the problem this legislation seeks to correct and believes that allowing districts and local boards some flexibility in right-fitting a solution that meets their unique needs is the right thing to do. We do, however, believe some parameters need to be put in place to ensure the safety and protection of both our students being transported and the adults doing the transporting.

We would ask that the following provisions be included in the legislation if it is to move forward:

1. That language be added requiring any vehicle that is to be used to transport students be made to adhere to minimum federal, state, and local safety standards to the degree possible.
2. That language be added requiring that the people responsible for transporting students be school district employees, subject to the same training, security, health, safety, and employment provisions as those who currently operate school buses in the respective school districts.

We believe these amendments would ensure that the vehicles used to transport our students are as safe as they can be given the exact types of vehicles used and that the people operating said vehicles are as well screened, well trained, and well protected as our other district transportation professionals.



**We ask the committee to issue a Favorable Report with the above referenced amendments to Senate Bill 448.**