



February 7, 2022

The Honorable Paul Pinsky and Members
Education, Health & Environmental Affairs Committee
Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Support – SB318 – More Opportunities for Career-Focused Students Act of 2022

Dear Chairman Pinsky and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland School Bus Contractors Association (MSBCA) supports SB318 – More Opportunities for Career-Focused Students Act of 2022. MSBCA serves as the voice of the private school bus companies that contract with local Maryland school systems in 18 of Maryland’s 24 jurisdictions to own and operate the nearly 3500 contracted school buses that transport schoolchildren across the State. MSBCA remains committed to the safety of the students they transport and considers it a privilege to do so.

As you well know, we are facing a severe school bus driver shortage, which has led to the suspension of bus services to schools across the State. Early training is key to helping to build up our driver pool and this bill will go a long way in ensuring such training is both available and promoted.

Specific to school bus drivers, it would permit local jurisdictions at their individual discretion the ability to lower the driving age of a driver from 21 to 19 ½. Together, this would allow potential school bus drivers the ability to begin training early and to be “behind the wheel” earlier as well, while still ensuring that they have a full three (3) years of general driving experience behind them. Once again, this bill does not mandate a lowered age requirement for school bus drivers, it merely permits local jurisdictions the ability lower the age should they so choose. Especially in rural areas where many young people begin driving large-scale farm equipment and other larger/atypical vehicles at an early age, it would serve to increase the pool of potential school bus drivers while allowing for local oversight and not sacrificing safety of the children being transported.

Once again, MSBCA supports SB318 and asks for a favorable report.

Thank you for your consideration and your commitment to our State.

Sincerely,

Steve Nelson

Steve Nelson, President
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410.268.3099

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