

**Juliana Aiko Nuñez
6409 Rock Forest Dr
Bethesda, MD 20817**

February 21, 2025

Judicial Proceedings Committee
Chair Will Smith Jr.
2 East
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

SB724 Motor Vehicles - School Buses - Seat Belts

Hello Chairman Smith and all the committee members, I am here to ask for your favorable report on SB724 Motor Vehicles - School Buses - Seat Belts

My name is Juliana Aiko Nuñez. I'm in fourth grade at Sidwell Friends School in Montgomery County, where I also live. After my dad got his job as the chief of staff for State Delegate Deni Taveras, I asked him if he could help make schools safer because of something scary that happened to me on a school bus.

I want to tell you why it's really important for all school buses to have seat belts. One time, on a field trip, our bus made a really quick turn, and I almost fell off my seat onto the floor. It was very scary. Then, on another trip, the bus stopped so suddenly that I had to put my arms up to protect my face. It made me feel really scared and confused.

Also, my dad showed me a news story about a bus that flipped over. The driver was okay because he had a seat belt, but the kids got hurt because they didn't have any seat belts. That made me think it's not fair for us kids not to have seat belts when it can be so dangerous.

I know adding seat belts to buses might cost more money, but keeping us safe is really important. It's not just about if someone could get hurt; it's about making sure we're all safe before anything bad happens. I want to be an artist and start my own business when I grow up. I'll pay taxes and help the state, but I need to be safe and healthy to do that. Please ask the policy analyst to consider my earning potential when updating the fiscal note.

So, I'm asking you to please make sure every school bus has seat belts. It's really important for all of us kids. Thank you for listening to me today.

In closing, I ask this esteemed committee for your favorable report on SB724.