



Senate Bill 208

Criminal Law - Assault of a Public Transportation Service Provider - Penalties

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Judicial Proceedings Committee

Date: January 13, 2021

From: D'Paul Nibber

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** SB 208. This bill extends criminal penalties to anyone who causes physical injury to a “bus operator, a train operator, a light rail operator, a paratransit operator, a station attendant, or any other individual engaged in providing public transit services.” These individuals keep Maryland’s transit system running so that workers can reach their places of employment and contribute to the economy. MACo recognizes the important contributions of these hard-working public servants and endorses these sensible protections.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, local governments and their workers have experienced extraordinary stress in sustaining public services for residents. Worker attrition and recruitment due to difficult work environments is a serious concern for MACo membership.

Specifically, several counties have reported experiencing issues recruiting and retaining school bus drivers, largely attributable to hostile work environments. In October of 2020, one Maryland Transit Administration driver was fatally shot while on duty. Another driver reported constant harassment on the job - including threats of violence and minor assault - resulting in her leaving her position.

Altogether, SB 208 is needed for two major reasons: reinforcing commitment to public servants and protecting a critical service: public transportation. For these reasons, MACo **SUPPORTS** SB 208 and urges a **FAVORABLE** report.