

HCS HB 538 -- SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION

SPONSOR: Diehl

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Elementary and Secondary Education by a vote of 17 to 6. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules-Administrative by a vote of 6 to 1.

The following is a summary of the House Committee Substitute for HB 538.

This bill expands the current background check requirements for school districts to specifically include charter schools. The bill includes drivers of other vehicles owned by school districts or charter schools in the requirement for a background check and clarifies that for drivers employed or contracted by a pupil transportation company under contract with a school district or charter school, the pupil transportation company must conduct the criminal background check.

Currently, the license for individuals 70 years and older, who have school bus endorsements on their drivers license, is issued or renewed for only one year at a time; the renewal fee is waived, the school bus portion of the drivers license examination must be taken annually, and a commercial driver's license with a school bus endorsement must be issued annually.

This HCS changes the age for these specific provisions to the age of 75 or older and changes the license examination requirement to every two years.

This bill is similar to HCS HB 2423 (2024) and includes language similar to HB 296 and HB 438(2025).

The following is a summary of the public testimony from the committee hearing. The testimony was based on the introduced version of the bill.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that this will help vetted caregivers provide transportation for an increasing area of demand. These services help homeless children and parents with low incomes get at-risk students to school. There is a current strain on resources like bus drivers and these companies that provide transportation services are a reliable way to alleviate some of the burden.

Testifying in person for the bill were Representative Diehl and Lauren Hulse, Hopskipdrive.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

Written testimony has been submitted for this bill. The full written testimony and witnesses testifying online can be found under Testimony on the bill page on the House website.