

I am a resident of District 32. I am testifying **in support of House Bill HB1204** Transportation Equity Analysis and Assurances Act.

This bill establishes a state-wide transportation equity analysis development, maintenance, review, and enforcement framework to ensure access to transportation is statutorily guaranteed for individuals regardless of race, ethnicity, national origin, English proficiency, ability status, and gender orientation.

Racial inequity has had a long tradition in Maryland transportation planning. The initial plan was for the light rail in Anne Arundel County to extend to Annapolis. But that was dismissed in 1992. The NIMBY principle prevailed. So our state capital remains inaccessible to many residents despite Annapolis being located between two important population centers.

Racial animus, however, has continued into the present time attempting to further disadvantage people of color. There has been a concerted effort to close some of the rail stations in the northern part of Anne Arundel County, where I live. Electioneering in 2018 had such obvious dog-whistles that even the foreign press heard them ([‘Addicts, crooks, and thieves’: The campaign to kill Baltimore’s light rail.](#) *The Guardian* 8/22/2018). Shamefully, many of my neighbors and my Delegate, now Senator Pamela Beidle, tried to close down light rail stations for years (see [Some Anne Arundel County residents want to shut down their light rail. Again.](#)). Fortunately, they were not successful because of the efforts of groups like the Baltimore Transit Equity Coalition. If they were to try this again, their efforts would not pass muster under HB1204, which is why this bill needs to be passed.

Some Black and Brown residents of Baltimore City rely heavily on public transportation. The cancellation of the Red Line in 2015 dashed hopes of being better able to access jobs and to arrive on time at those jobs compared to the bus system. For funds to then go to building such things as traffic circles in sparsely populated white areas of Western Maryland added insult to injury. In addition, support was given to the Purple Line that primarily will benefit white suburbanites of DC. Delegate Sheila Ruth, the sponsor of this bill said “If this bill had been enacted before June 2015, the Red Line would not have been canceled.”

The racial inequity continues even during the pandemic. In response to record low ridership in recent months, the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) recently aimed to eliminate 25 Baltimore bus lines that would affect mostly Black neighborhoods. Even though the MTA backed off of its plans, they should never have been able to make those budget cut decisions without an analysis for how much it would disproportionately impact Black workers in Baltimore, and across the state of Maryland trying to get to their jobs.

As Mayor Brandon Scott said: "Historically, transit and equity has always been linked back to racial injustice, in Baltimore and beyond." As Delegate Ruth said “Real people’s lives are impacted by access to affordable, convenient and accessible transportation. All Marylanders, regardless of race, income, ZIP code or disability should have an equal right to the benefits of a well-planned transportation system. HB 1204 will help to ensure that Maryland’s transportation planning is equitable and our transportation systems serve all Maryland residents fairly.”

If this bill does not become law, the pattern of racial inequity will continue. This is not who we want to be as Marylanders. I strongly encourage you to vote in SUPPORT of HB1204.

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,

Lynda Davis
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