



Mar. 9, 2021

Testimony on HB 1204
Transit Equity Act
Environment & Transportation Committee

Position: Favorable

Dear Mr. Chairman and Committee Members,

My name is Molly Sherman from District 15. In this favorable testimony for the Transit Equity Act, I am empowered to represent the Sunrise Movement hub of McDaniel College. The Sunrise Movement is a youth movement to stop climate change and create millions of good jobs in the process.

Maryland has a shamefully long history of racist transportation policies, from highways built through and dividing Black communities to the cancelation of the Red Line route, urgently-needed access to jobs for residents in low-income, redlined communities in Baltimore and regional economy-transforming, transit-oriented-development (TOD). Equitable transportation will play a key role in dismantling systemic racism by:

- Increasing access to good jobs, schools, education, and food;
- Providing incentives for community economic development;
- Reducing smog, air pollution, and heat islands, which disproportionately impact Black communities

Transportation equity is also important for people with disabilities. Because many people with disabilities do not have the option to drive cars, lack of access to other modes of transportation disproportionately harms them. Without access to transportation, people with disabilities continue to be alienated from the economic mainstream. People with disabilities are twice as likely to live in poverty in part due to difficulty accessing jobs, education and medical care. Because many individuals with disabilities have increased health care needs, isolation can have a profound impact on quality of life, health, and safety.

The Transportation Equity Act requires:

- Equity as a primary goal in the Maryland Transportation Plan;
- MDOT to collect and analyze data on racial disparities and impact on persons with disabilities in the annual Attainment Report;
- Adding a representative from the Maryland State Conference NAACP to the Attainment Advisory Committee;
- Creation of a Commission on Transportation Equity as an independent transit monitor and evaluator;
- MDOT MTA to conduct transit equity analyses, cost benefit analyses, and outreach to affected communities before public hearings on any major service change;
- MDOT MTA to perform cross-modal equity analysis and planning;
- Increased transparency with annual reporting and service change analysis reporting.



Ultimately, there is a need for greater transparency, accountability and community input. Equity should not be an afterthought or a box to check. Real people's lives are impacted by 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.

The Transit Equity Assurance Act is very important to the Sunrise Movement because we believe that everyone deserves dignity in America. The movement consists of people from all types of backgrounds; we have people of all races and people with various disabilities. We want to create a space for those people

As a resident of both Carroll County and Montgomery County, I see the effects of isolation on people in my communities. People in my college hub of the movement have voiced being unable to obtain internships because they are not afforded sufficient transportation access to get to them. Futures should not be gatekept by transportation access and we need a process in place that ensures students can get the experience they need, let alone the many that need it more to get to healthcare, childcare, and work.

I and Sunrise Movement McDaniel encourage a FAVORABLE report for this important legislation. Thank you for your time and consideration.

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