



Empowerment. Integration. Equality.

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House Environment and Transportation

IN SUPPORT OF HB 1204

Transportation Equity Analyses and Assurances Act of 2021

March 11, 2021

Disability Rights Maryland (DRM) is the state-designated Protection and Advocacy agency authorized to advocate for the rights of individuals with disabilities. DRM is dedicated to advancing the civil rights of people with disabilities. This legislation is significant to people with whom we work as it impacts access not only to transportation, but how transportation services effect access to education, health care, employment and decent housing.

While we focus on persons with disabilities, we recognize the intersectionality with persons of color. Our legacy of race and disability discrimination has driven our patterns of segregation and exclusion. Our transit system reflects our segregationist history.

Without access to transportation, people with disabilities continue to be alienated from the economic mainstream. The National Council on Disability identifies transportation as a major barrier to community inclusion for people with disabilities affecting access to employment, education, health care services, and social activities. This is especially true in Baltimore, where a 2006 study by the Baltimore Metropolitan Council found that 43% of the population has a self-reported travel-related disability and a 2010 customer survey conducted by Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) found that the average income for persons with disabilities using paratransit services is \$10,000-20,000 per year. A 2012 American Community Survey found that over 30% of Baltimore City's households are non-vehicle, the majority of which are low income.

Some people with disabilities never leave home because of transportation difficulties.¹ Because many people with disabilities and many low-income households do not have access to cars, lack of public transportation disproportionately harms them. People with disabilities are twice as likely to live in poverty in part due to difficulty accessing jobs, education and medical care.

The Transportation Equity Act requires data collection and analysis of the impact of transportation on people with disabilities and people of color. HB 1204 is long overdue remedial legislation. While a person's health, income and opportunity should not be defined by where they live, without the equity analysis required by this proposed bill, our discriminatory patterns cannot be expected to change. We must account for the impact of our

¹ U.S. Department of Transportation: Bureau of Transportation Statistics. (2003). Transportation Difficulties Keep Over Half a Million Disabled at Home. Retrieved from http://www.bts.gov/publications/special_reports_and_issues_briefs/issue_briefs/number_03/pdf/entire.pdf

public services. We heartily support this legislation and Disability Rights Maryland is honored to assist and serve on the proposed Commission.

Respectfully submitted,



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