



Testimony on HB1204
Transportation Equity Analyses and Assurances Act of 2021
Position: FAVORABLE

Greetings Chair Barve and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

My name is Ricarra Jones and I am the Political Director with 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East. We are the largest healthcare workers union in the United States – and we represent 10,000 members in Maryland alone. Our union supports HB1204 and asks the Committee to issue a favorable report on this legislation because public transportation needs not only to be affordable, but to be equitable to people of all races and physical abilities as well.

1199SEIU members save lives on the frontlines of the COVID19 pandemic. Their ability to provide high-quality care for millions of Marylanders is often negatively impacted by unreliable public transportation. Many of our members have no “grace period” for tardiness, which leads to them being disciplined if they are only one minute late to work. Healthcare workers must arrive on time every day, not only for their job security but additionally to provide quality patient care. It is incontrovertible that caring for a patient cannot be stalled based on unreliable transportation methods and as such, the State must make it a priority for healthcare workers and other essential workers to utilize dependable transportation.

Not unlike COVID19, racism is a public health crisis we must act urgently to repair. Extreme racial disparities in the availability of accessible public transportation are present in Maryland, with more low-income Black and Brown Marylanders facing barriers to accessing transportation than middle and upper income, predominantly White Marylanders. It has been over 60 years since the powerful bus boycotts in Montgomery, Alabama, yet Black and Brown transit riders in Maryland and nation-wide are still fighting for our right to have equitable access to safe and affordable public transportation. HB1204 seeks to rectify this injustice. Black Lives Matter includes Black public transit riders, so please vote yes on this bill. Thank you.

Respectfully,

Ricarra Jones
Political Director, 1199SEIU UHE
ricarra.jones@1199.org