

Dear Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

This testimony is being submitted by Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of individuals working to move white folks as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City and Baltimore County. We are also working in collaboration with the Baltimore Transit Equity Coalition. I am a resident of MD District 42A. For four years, I relied predominantly on public transit to buy groceries, visit friends, attend doctor appointments, and get to work. It sucked. The buses were often late, overcrowded or would never show up. Many of the bus stops did not have covers on it, so I would get rained on. It took 2-4 times longer to do any task than it would with a car. The transportation also smelled terrible and sent me out into the world with that smell clinging to me. When I visited Perth, Australia and DC I realized transportation does not have to be this way. It can work efficiently and smell good for the same price. The main difference I noticed between those cities and Baltimore, is that there are a lot more white riders in the other cities than there is in Baltimore. This is why I am **testifying in support of House Bill 1204**.



House Bill 1204 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.

In response to record low ridership in recent months, the Maryland Transit Administration 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.

Sharif Rashid, a Baltimore resident, and the Baltimore Transit Equity Coalition pushed back to stop the agency but it still slashed service, making it difficult for Rashid and others to get to their jobs.

In an article published on Dec 28th 2020 by The Public News Service, journalist Diane Bernard quotes a bus rider in Baltimore who stated at a recent Montgomery Bus Boycott Solidarity Event "When the pandemic hit I had to change the location of my job, and now I'm currently at FedEx," Rashid explained. "Just for, you know, a \$16 or \$17 wage, I've got to go hours out of the way. If I catch a Lyft or Uber, it's \$25 or \$30; I didn't really make anything for the day, you know what I mean?". Rashid has an almost three-hour commute to get to his job that would take less than 30 minutes in a car.

Brandon Scott, Baltimore's newly elected Mayor, also attended the Transit Equity Solidarity Day Action to honor the Montgomery Bus Boycott, and stated "Baltimore's Black neighborhoods are still dealing with the challenges and injustices of biased transit policies."

"Historically, transit and equity has always been linked back to racial injustice, in Baltimore and beyond," Scott remarked. "The work that's happening today is building on the work of civil rights leaders like Claudette Colvin and Rosa Parks, who we know started the Montgomery bus boycott."

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of House Bill 1204**. Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Christina Simmons  
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Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore