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**Written Testimony submitted to the Maryland Senate Finance Committee
HB 1144 - State Public Transit Service and Stations –
Exclusion for Assault and Bodily Injury
March 27, 2025**

SUPPORT

AFT Maryland asks for a favorable report on HB 1144, legislation that seeks to enhance the safety of Maryland's public transit system by establishing clear consequences for individuals who commit acts of assault or intentional bodily injury while utilizing public transit services.

Transit operators, who serve as the backbone of our transportation system, should be able to perform their duties without fear of violence or harassment. Unfortunately, incidents of assault on public transit have become an increasing concern, putting both transit workers and passengers at risk. HB 1144 addresses this urgent issue by prohibiting individuals who commit acts of violence from using public transit for specified periods based on the severity and recurrence of their offenses.

Under HB 1144, individuals accused of assaulting a transit operator or passenger while on board a bus, train, light rail, or subway service, or at a state public transit station, may be prohibited from using transit services or entering stations. To ensure fair enforcement, the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) will establish guidelines for implementing exclusions and provide an appeals process for affected individuals.

Additionally, the MTA, in collaboration with the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, the Joint Safety Committee, and transit operator unions, will convene a workgroup to develop a rider code of conduct and strengthen safety protocols. This workgroup will also determine appropriate consequences for violations, including ridership bans, legal action, and alternative measures for individuals with disabilities who rely on public transit.

HB 1144 strikes the right balance between public safety and fairness. By ensuring that individuals who engage in violent behavior face real consequences, this bill will help create a more secure and welcoming environment on Maryland's public transit system. Thank you.

