

Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1300

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Proudly representing the transit workers of the MTA!



HB 1081 - Maryland Transit Administration Reform Act Favorable House Environment and Transportation Committee February 26, 2026

ATU Local 1300 represents over 3,000 transit workers at the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA). This includes bus operators, bus mechanics, rail operators, rail maintenance workers, and more. Our members keep Maryland moving every day.

Since the cancellation of the MTA's Red Line rail project in 2015, Baltimore transit riders, elected officials, and organizations have renewed their calls for expanded Baltimore regional input and authority over the decisions made that impact their everyday transportation. Some even advocated for the full dismantling of the MTA system in Baltimore and the creation of a Baltimore Regional Transit Authority (BRTA), a move that we believed would have unintended financial and logistical consequences.

In 2023, the General Assembly passed legislation that created the Baltimore Regional Transit Commission (BRTC), a first of its kind entity for Baltimore residents to be given some direct voice in the oversight of MTA services in the area. The BRTC importantly included a seat for labor representatives of frontline MTA workers, following the model of other transit systems around the country. ATU Local 1300 was proud to participate in this process, but we often felt that the BRTC did not have sufficient authority to provide oversight or accountability. The Red Line was re-announced, but many advocates framed their ongoing concerns with one question, "If there were a Governor unfriendly to transit, what would stop them from canceling the project all over again?"

2025's HB 517 paved the way for a comprehensive review of the MTA's structure and explored ways where the administration may make governance changes to provide appropriate oversight and input for local Baltimore City transit services. The Workgroup had some limitations. It wasn't really tasked with tackling some of the complicated funding discussions necessary for any real restructure. Nevertheless, we were happy to attend every meeting as members of the public and interested stakeholders. We provided routine commentary and feedback, especially around ATU's experiences with transit reorganizations. We flagged concerns about UMTA 13(c) issues and jeopardizing federal funding if reorganizations were done poorly. We also raised concerns about how pension liabilities may be transferred. Ultimately, Local 1300 is happy with where the workgroup came to consensus. It does not really make sense, practically, to do a full reorganization or breaking apart of the MTA, though the introduction of a new Core Services Board and a Commuter Services Advisory Board will go a long way towards addressing transit rider concerns. Like the BRTC, we were happy to see the inclusion of a labor seat on the Baltimore Core Service Board.

We believe that long term funding questions for the MTA have not been resolved, but the Workgroup did a thorough job in addressing its charge. We believe the MTA Reform Act found a happy medium between modernization, addressing the concerns of a particular region versus MTA's statewide role, and avoiding common transit reorganization pitfalls. We urge the committee to issue a favorable report on this bill.