

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2023 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader

Senate Bill 693

(Senator Waldstreicher)

Judicial Proceedings

Environment and Transportation

Transportation - Assaults on Public Transit Operators - Report

This bill requires the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) to submit an annual report on assaults on public transit operators, including specified information, by December 1 each year. The report must be submitted to each local executive authority, the State’s Attorney for each county, and specified committees of the General Assembly. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2023.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Transportation Trust Fund (TTF) expenditures increase by \$50,000 in FY 2024 only to evaluate the feasibility of establishing a statewide local transit safety officer, as required for the first annual report; the bill’s other reporting requirements can be handled using existing budgeted resources. Revenues are not affected.

(in dollars)	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
SF Expenditure	50,000	0	0	0	0
Net Effect	(\$50,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Note: () = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate increase; (-) = indeterminate decrease

Local Effect: Local governments can provide the required data to MTA (and receive the reports from MTA) using existing budgeted resources. Revenues are not affected.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: For purposes of the bill, “public transit operator” means an individual who is (1) employed by MTA, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), or a political subdivision of the State and (2) engaged in providing public transportation services, including bus, train, light rail, and subway services. “Public transit operator” includes a transit station manager.

Each report must include, for the immediately preceding 12 months:

- for each assault on a public transit operator (1) the nature of the assault; (2) the mode of transit where the assault occurred; (3) the location of the assault; (4) whether police were involved in responding to the assault; and (5) the outcome of any investigation into the assault, including any disciplinary action taken, if the information is available;
- a comparison of that data, in aggregate, with at least two other states with similar transit systems or populations; and
- a review of current transit industry best practices to prevent and mitigate assaults on public transit operators.

The first annual report, due December 1, 2023, must also include:

- all of the aforementioned data on assaults for each of the immediately preceding five years;
- an evaluation of assault prevention and mitigation technology and policies for each transit system operated by a political subdivision;
- recommendations to improve the existing assault prevention and mitigation technology and policies for each transit system operated by a political subdivision; and
- an evaluation of the feasibility of establishing a statewide local transit safety officer to provide guidance to transit systems operated by political subdivisions on best practices to prevent and mitigate assaults on public transit operators.

Current Law: MTA is a modal unit within the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT), and it operates a comprehensive transit system throughout the Baltimore-Washington metropolitan area, including more than 50 local bus lines in Baltimore and other services such as the light rail, Baltimore Metro subway, commuter buses, MARC trains, and mobility/paratransit vehicles. With the exception of the District of Columbia Metrorail system (which is managed by WMATA) and some local bus services (such as those managed by the Montgomery County Department of

Transportation), MDOT and MTA are generally the agencies responsible for the construction and operation of transit lines in the State.

WMATA was established in 1967 through an interstate compact among Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia. The original purpose was construction and operation of a rapid rail transit system for the Washington metropolitan area. In 1973, WMATA purchased the assets of four major private bus companies operating in the area. Maryland's overall participation in the Washington metropolitan transit system consists of the provision of annual funding to WMATA for capital and operating costs of the Metrorail, Metrobus, and MetroAccess systems.

State Expenditures: MTA advises that it currently has an internal committee dedicated to collecting and reviewing data, strategies, potential causes, and responses to operator assaults; however, the committee does not have any knowledge or expertise related to local transit safety officers.

Accordingly, TTF expenditures increase by \$50,000 in fiscal 2024 only for MTA to engage one of its expert consultants to conduct the evaluation of the feasibility of establishing a statewide local transit safety officer; this evaluation is only required for the first annual report (due December 1, 2023) and, as such, there are no ongoing costs. MTA's existing committee can handle the remainder of the bill's reporting requirements using existing budgeted resources.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: HB 1049 (Delegate Bridges) - Environment and Transportation.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of Transportation; Harford and Montgomery counties; City of College Park; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 23, 2023
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