

Testimony on SB 199
Maryland Transit Safety & Investment Act
Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
January 20, 2021

Favorable

As a person with a physical disability who requires walking aids to move about the world, the safety and reliability of the MTA Mobility service is paramount to my ability to function in society. It serves as both a necessity to my independence and my ability to progress in areas both related and unrelated to my disabilities.

MTA Mobility as a part of the Maryland transit system, has helped me open doors to career possibilities and thrive in the college setting. However, the budgetary constraints of MTA which effect Mobility Services have greatly impacted my safety and my ability to get from one location to another. In my years of riding MTA Mobility, on dozens of occasions, I have been stranded at medical appointments, missed college classes and left outside of museums, supermarkets and other establishments past their closing time, for stretches of three to seven hours. On some of those occasions, I had call around to find an alternative ride to get home because it was too cold or too dark to remain outside. This is particularly troublesome because as a person in a wheelchair, it is very difficult to find someone who can accommodate me and my chair in their vehicle at a moment's notice.

Due to the increase rider demand and the lack of working available buses and drivers, I've spent many days and nights on the bus for two to four hours just waiting my turn to go home. Just as many people rely on the Maryland bus service to get to work and other places in the Baltimore area, there are thousands of Mobility riders like me who rely on the mobility service as their only mode of transportation. When Mobility fails to show up or drop us off at the proper location in a timely manner, it is detrimental to people like me because I don't have another option to get where I need to go. Being stranded in the cold with no idea how and when I'm going to get home, or being stuck on an MTA bus for two to four hours because there are too many people to pick up and drop off, is directly tied to the underfunding of MTA services.

The underfunding of MTA threatens the safety and security of all of its riders and puts undue strain on the drivers who work so hard to get us where we need to go. None of us would want to put someone we love in a position of panic and terror because they don't know if they're going to get home safely, yet we do it every day when we underfund the very service that provides invaluable transportation to those who have little to no other options. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



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