



DATE: Tuesday, February 18, 2021

BILL: House Bill 947 – Maryland Transit Administration - Disabled Reduced Fare Program for Opioid Treatment Program Patients - Modifications

COMMITTEE: House Environment and Transportation Committee
The Honorable Kumar Barve, Chair

POSITION: FAVORABLE

On behalf of Turning Point we submit the following testimony in **SUPPORT** of House Bill 947. This bill will make important modifications to the Disabled Reduced Fare Program for Opioid Treatment Program Patients to ensure the intent of the legislation that passed last year, SB705, is achieved.

Specifically, HB947 will require the Administration to allow opioid treatment programs to certify eligibility for and issue identification cards and monthly transit passes to qualifying patients; and require rather than authorize participating opioid treatment programs to issue the identification cards and transit passes to patients on-site.

The intent of SB705 and the testimony provided by its proponents during the 2020 Session was that OTPs would be able to issue disabled reduced fare passes directly and, in their entirety, onsite.

This was intended to eliminate patients having to make a separate trip to the MTA Transit Baltimore office for purposes of getting their ID picture taken, which can easily be done at the OTP.

Often it is touch and go with continuing treatment and research shows that transportation time and cost is one impediment in the long road to recovery. If a patient misses one day due to lack of funds, he or she is very unlikely to return to treatment anytime soon. The bus pass convenience is not a small but quite significant step and a positive one as we need to do all we can to keep patients in programs.

HB947 will allow OTPs, that wish to participate, to issue bus passes including the “certification of eligibility” and the “issuing of identification cards” on site for use by patients who qualify for MTA’s Disabled Reduced Fare Program.

To eliminate this crippling obstacle, we are asking for a FAVORABLE report on House Bill 947.