



Mar. 9, 2021

Testimony on HB 1204
Transit Equity Act
Environment & Transportation Committee

Position: Favorable

Dear Mr. Chairman and Committee Members,

My name is Maisha Nubah from District 3rd. I am a member of Sunrise Silver Spring and I'm writing to you in favor of the Transit Equity Act.

Maryland has a shamefully long history of racist transportation policies, from highways built through and dividing Black communities to the cancelation of the Red Line route, urgently-needed access to jobs for residents in low-income, redlined communities in Baltimore and regional economy-transforming, transit-oriented-development (TOD). Equitable transportation will play a key role in dismantling systemic racism by:

- Increasing access to good jobs, schools, education, and food;
- Providing incentives for community economic development;
- Reducing smog, air pollution, and heat islands, which disproportionately impact Black communities

Transportation equity is also important for people with disabilities. Because many people with disabilities do not have the option to drive cars, lack of access to other modes of transportation disproportionately harms them. Without access to transportation, people with disabilities continue to be alienated from the economic mainstream. People with disabilities are twice as likely to live in poverty in part due to difficulty accessing jobs, education and medical care. Because many individuals with disabilities have increased health care needs, isolation can have a profound impact on quality of life, health, and safety.

The Transportation Equity Act requires:

- Equity as a primary goal in the Maryland Transportation Plan;
- MDOT to collect and analyze data on racial disparities and impact on persons with disabilities in the annual Attainment Report;
- Adding a representative from the Maryland State Conference NAACP to the Attainment Advisory Committee;
- Creation of a Commission on Transportation Equity as an independent transit monitor and evaluator;
- MDOT MTA to conduct transit equity analyses, cost benefit analyses, and outreach to affected communities before public hearings on any major service change;
- MDOT MTA to perform cross-modal equity analysis and planning;
- Increased transparency with annual reporting and service change analysis reporting.



Ultimately, there is a need for greater transparency, accountability and community input. Equity should not be an afterthought or a box to check. Real people's lives are impacted by transportation. All Marylanders, regardless of race, income, zip code, or disability, should have an equal right to the benefits of a well-planned transportation system.

The Transit Equity Assurance Act is very important to the Sunrise Movement because we believe that everyone deserves dignity in America. The movement consists of people from all types of backgrounds; we have people of all races and people with various disabilities. We want to create a space that works best for everyone. We know that our public transportation system is failing the black people who are involved in Sunrise. We want to guarantee all people a good transportation system so they can contribute to society and be a part of movements like ours. I support this bill because I know many people who are being disproportionately affected by our racist transportation system. My friends who are disabled have a hard time with public transportation in Maryland. This type of transportation system is unacceptable for our country and I want to join the fight for a better and easier transportation system for all Marylanders.

I encourage a FAVORABLE report for this important legislation. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Maisha Nubah
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