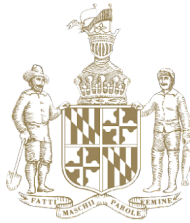


STEPHANIE SMITH
Legislative District 45
Baltimore City

Appropriations Committee

House Chair
Baltimore City Delegation



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HB1055 - Transportation - Student Transportation - Carpooling
Hearing: March 8th, 2022

Chairman McIntosh, Vice Chair Chang, and Members of the Appropriations Committee,

Baltimore city students have long been unsatisfied and let down by a lack of transportation. Currently, there are about 29,000 Baltimore city middle and high school students that rely on public transportation to get to their schools according to a 2020 study done by the Fund for Educational Excellence. That is 73% of the school system's middle and high school student population that relies on MTA public transit services to get to and from school, extracurricular activities, internships, and jobs. These students have been forced to rely on a transportation system that was not designed to serve them for far too long. It is our responsibility as legislators to find and provide safe and reliable transportation for all of Baltimore city students.

The Fund for Educational Excellence [report](#) outlines some of the many obstacles they face because of their current transportation system:

- Student safety while traveling to and from school: Although many students feel safe overall on the trip to and from school, a number of students are uncomfortable or uneasy during at least part of the trip.
- How students get to and from school: Most students rely on MTA buses to get to and from school most of the time.
- High school choice decision-making: Distance and complexity of a potential commute to school are limiting factors many students take into account when deciding which schools they will apply to.
- Lost learning time: Unreliable public transportation is the primary reason students cite for being late to school.
- Commute time: Students often take multiple buses and/or trains to school, and wait times for each 'leg' of a commute can result in commutes of 45 minutes or longer.

- Transit reliability: Most students find MTA buses unreliable, forcing them to deal with consequences at both school and work.
- Negative experiences with adults on transit: Arguments and physical fights between adults are a regular feature of students' commutes on public transit.
- Measures students take to ensure their safety while traveling to and from school: Many students feel a need to be cautious and vigilant while commuting to or from school and to be very aware of their surroundings.

Carpooling is a reliable way to help get our Baltimore city students to and from school, especially where transit is not available. MTA is not always a reliable means of transportation as buses could break down, subway trains could be delayed, and traffic patterns could shift because of potential road closures. It is because of these obstacles that lead to students being late or sometimes missing classes. Lack of transportation should never be a barrier for our students and their education. They should have every option made available to them to get to school. HB 1055 seeks to establish a work study group designed to study the impact of a student carpool incentive program. This incentive program is intended to provide incentives for participating city schools and parents or guardians to arrange a carpool program as a more safe and reliable alternative to public transit.

For these reasons, I urge you to vote favorably on HB1055

Sincerely,

Delegate Stephanie Smith