BTU Testimony Supporting HB1055.pdf Uploaded by: Corey Gaber Position: FAV



AFT 340 AFL-CIO Seton Business Park 5800 Metro Drive Baltimore, MD 21215-3209

Testimony on HB1055

Transportation - Student Transportation - Transit Buses and Carpooling

Position: FAVORABLE

To Chair McIntosh and the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Corey Gaber and I'm a District 40 resident and a Vice President on the Baltimore Teachers Union Executive Board. The Baltimore Teachers Union represents over 7,000 teachers, paraprofessionals, and other school related personnel. BTU supports HB1055 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.

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 (about 73% of all students) that rely on public transportation to get to their schools according to a 2020 study done by the Fund for Educational Excellence. Even prior to this study you could have asked any student or staff member about the impact poor public transportation has on student attendance and tardiness, and how much that loss of learning time impacts student outcomes overall.

Carpooling is a reliable way to help get our Baltimore city students to and from school, especially where transit is not available. While we need to tackle the larger structural issues that have resulted in Baltimore City's poor public transportation infrastructure, we need to simultaneously explore any and all short and long term strategies to help the students, families, and staff members get to where they need to be efficiently and on time.

For these reasons, we ask for a favorable report on HB 1055.

Sincerely,

Corey Gaber, Vice President cgaber@baltu.org 410-458-3820 Baltimore Teachers Union

Fund_Testimony 1055.pdf Uploaded by: Corrie Schoenberg Position: FAV



March 3, 2021

Testimony on HB 1055 Student Transportation- Transit Buses and Carpooling

Position: Favorable

The Fund for Educational Excellence supports HB 1055, Student Transportation- Transit Buses and Carpooling.

Baltimore City Public Schools students are the only students in the State of Maryland who rely on MTA public transit to get to and from school. MTA buses and trains must get City Schools students to school safely and on time, just as students in other Maryland school districts are provided safe, reliable transportation to their schools. There are 29,000 Baltimore City Public School students, including 60% of high schoolers, using public transit to get to and from school. Baltimore City's transit systems have higher breakdown rates, less connectivity and lower reliability than the transit systems in most other major metropolitan areas. When considering this, it is likely not a coincidence that Baltimore City Public Schools students have a chronic absenteeism rate of 37%.

Frequent, reliable, and accessible transit is inextricably tied to the success of Baltimore's students and families, and yet access to transit in this city, like so many other things, is deeply inequitable, too often distributed along the expected lines of race and class.

School Choice was implemented in Baltimore City in 2005, and 16 years later has not reached its potential. Choice is designed to allow equitable access to quality schools for all students, allowing them to attend any public school within City limits. We have a system that families cannot take advantage of due to public transit deficiencies. This strategy cannot be effective if there is no robust transit system working in support of it.

School communities deserve to see tangible improvements in public transit accessibility, reliability, and efficiency. House Bill (HB1055) will increase the number of buses available to student commuters, ensuring more frequent service along the busiest routes. It also prioritizes hiring and retaining more operators and mechanics to run more frequent service on routes heavily used by students. It digitizes the student cards, removing unnecessary barriers that prevent students from attending school. We would like to see amendments to cover all middle and high school students and remove restrictions on days and hours for using their transit pass. It will also establish an incentive that encourages schools to promote carpooling and compensates families to transport students via carpool to reduce the capacity strain on buses.

School communities deserve to see tangible improvement in public transit access, reliability, and efficiency.

We encourage a FAVORABLE report for this important legislation.



Sincerely, *Ruth Farfel*

Ruth Farfel Manager—Analysis and Engagement Fund for Educational Excellence

Del. Stephanie Smith's Testimony.pdf Uploaded by: Lamar Robinson

Position: FAV

STEPHANIE SMITH Legislative District 45 Baltimore City

Appropriations Committee

House Chair Baltimore City Delegation



The Maryland House of Delegates 6 Bladen Street, Room 316 Annapolis, Maryland 21401 410-841-3486 · 301-858-3486 800-492-7122 *Ext.* 3486 Stephanie.Smith@house.state.md.us

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 <u>report</u> 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

Hb1055 Amendment

Uploaded by: Lamar Robinson Position: FAV

UNOFFICIAL COPY OF HOUSE BILL 1055

R2, F1

HOUSE BILL 1055

2lr2701

By: **Delegate Smith** Introduced and read first time: February 10, 2022 Assigned to: Appropriations and Ways and Means

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 Transportation - Student Transportation - Transit Buses and Carpooling

3 FOR the purpose of requiring the Maryland Transit Administration to provide middle

4 school and high school students in Baltimore City with a tangible and digital student

5 transit pass and student transit identification card; authorizing a student who loses

- 6 a student transit pass or student transit identification card and appears to be under
- 7 a certain age to ride a transit bus without charge; prohibiting the Administration
- 8 from imposing any restrictions on the use of a student transit pass; establishing a
- 9 Student Carpool Incentive Program; requiring the State Department of
- 10 Transportation to provide a certain amount to schools and carpool drivers

11 participating in the Program; requiring the Administration on or before a certain

- 12 date for certain years, to increase bus driver pay by a certain amount per hour;
- 13 requiring the Administration, on or before a certain date for certain years, to add a
- 14 certain number of transit buses to the Baltimore City weekday fleet; requiring a
- 15 transit bus to stop for certain individuals; establishing the Workgroup on Student Carpools; and generally relating to student
- 16 transportation and bus transit.
- 17 BY adding to
- 18 Article Education
- 19 Section 7-810 and 7-811
- 20 Annotated Code of Maryland
- 21 (2018 Replacement Volume and 2021 Supplement)

22 BY adding to

- 23 Article Transportation
- 24 Section 7-710 and 7-714
- 25 Annotated Code of Maryland
- 26 (2020 Replacement Volume and 2021 Supplement)

27 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,

28 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

	UNOFFICIAL COPY OF HOUSE BILL 1055
1	Article - Education
2	7-810.
3	(A) THIS SECTION APPLIES ONLY IN BALTIMORE CITY.
4 5	(B) (1) THE MARYLAND TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION SHALL PROVIDE MIDDLE SCHOOL AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WITH A TANGIBLE AND DIGITAL:
6	(I) STUDENT TRANSIT PASS; AND
7	(II) STUDENT TRANSIT IDENTIFICATION CARD.
8 9 10	(2) A STUDENT WHO LOSES A STUDENT TRANSIT PASS OR STUDENT TRANSIT IDENTIFICATION CARD AND APPEARS TO BE UNDER THE AGE OF 22 YEARS MAY RIDE A TRANSIT BUS WITHOUT CHARGE.
$\begin{array}{c} 11 \\ 12 \end{array}$	(C) THE ADMINISTRATION MAY NOT IMPOSE ANY RESTRICTIONS, INCLUDING TEMPORAL RESTRICTIONS, ON THE USE OF A STUDENT TRANSIT PASS.
13	7-811.
14	(A) THERE IS A STUDENT CARPOOL INCENTIVE PROGRAM.
15	(B) THE PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM IS TO PROVIDE INCENTIVES FOR:
16	(1) Schools to encourage carpooling; and
17 18	(2) PARENTS OR GUARDIANS TO TRANSPORT STUDENTS USING CARPOOLS.
19 20	(C) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL CREATE AND PUBLISH ON ITS WEBSITE A REGISTRATION PORTAL FOR THE PROGRAM.
21 22 23	(d) (1) To participate in the Program, a parent or guardian shall register the carpool on the Program portal, including information on the school that a participating student attends.
$\begin{array}{c} 24 \\ 25 \end{array}$	(2) A PARENT OR GUARDIAN MAY DESIGNATE ANOTHER INDIVIDUAL A S A CARPOOL DRIVER.
26	(E) FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE PROGRAM EACH VEAR THE STATE

26 **(E)** FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE PROGRAM, EACH YEAR THE STATE 27 DEDADTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION SHALL PROVIDE:

27 **Department of Transportation shall provide:**

 $\mathbf{2}$

UNOFFICIAL COPY OF HOUSE BILL 1055

3

$\frac{1}{2}$	(1) \$1,000 TO A PARTICIPATING SCHOOL FOR EACH CARPOOL TRANSPORTING FOUR OR MORE STUDENTS FROM THREE OR MORE HOUSEHOLDS;
3	AND
$\frac{4}{5}$	(2) \$300 TO THE REGISTERED CARPOOL DRIVER FOR EACH REGISTERED STUDENT.
6	Article - Transportation
7	7-710.
8 9	(A) ON OR BEFORE JULY 1, 2023, AND EACH JULY 1 THEREAFTER THROUGH 2027, THE Administration shall increase bus driver pay by \$1 per hour.
$10 \\ 11 \\ 12$	(b) On or before July 1, 2023, and each July 1 thereafter through 2026, the Administration shall add 100 transit buses to the Baltimore City weekday fleet.
13	7-714.
14	A TRANSIT BUS SHALL STOP FOR:
15	(1) PREGNANT INDIVIDUALS;
16	(2) MOTHERS WITH YOUNG CHILDREN; AND
17	(3) INDIVIDUALS WHO APPEAR TO BE UNDER THE AGE OF 22 YEARS.
	(a) There is a Workgroup on Student Carpools.
	(b) <u>The Workgroup consists of the following members:</u>
	(1) <u>one member of the Senate of Maryland, appointed by the President of</u> <u>the Senate:</u>
	(2) <u>one member of the House of Delegates, appointed by the Speaker of the</u> <u>House:</u>
	(3) <u>one representative of the Governor's Office, appointed by the</u> <u>Governor;</u>
	(4) one representative of the Maryland Transit Administration, designated by the Transit Administrator;
	(5) one representative of the State Department of Education, designated by the State Superintendent:
	(6) <u>one representative of Baltimore City Public Schools, designated by the</u> Superintendent of Baltimore City Public Schools;
	(7) one representative of the Baltimore Teachers Union, designated by the President of the Baltimore City Teachers Union; and
	(8) <u>one representative of the Associated Student Congress of Baltimore</u> <u>City, designated by the President of the Associated Student Congress of Baltimore</u> <u>City.</u>
	(c) <u>The Workgroup shall elect a chair from among its members.</u>
	(d) <u>The Workgroup shall:</u>

(1) study the feasibility of developing and implementing student carpool incentives;

(2) <u>study the prevalence and accessibility of services that offer a</u> <u>combination of child care and ridesharing; and</u>

(3) <u>make recommendations regarding increasing student carpools in the</u> <u>State.</u>

(g) On or before December 1, 2022, the Workgroup shall report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2-1257 of the State Government Article, the General Assembly.

18 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July

19 1, 2022. <u>It shall remain effective for a period of 1 year and, at the end of June 30, 2023, this Act, with</u> no further action required by the General Assembly, shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.

House Bill 1055 - Student Student Transportation -Uploaded by: Natasha Escobar

Position: FAV

Chair Maggie McIntosh, Vice Chair Mark Chang and esteemed members of the House Appropriations Committee;

We are writing to request you issue a favorable report on House Bill 1055.

Baltimore City Public School students are the only students in the State of Maryland who rely on MTA public transit to get to and from school. It is incumbent on our state's leadership to ensure that MTA buses and trains get City Schools students to school safely and on time, just as students in other Maryland school districts are provided safe, reliable transportation to their schools.

Frequent, reliable, safe, and accessible transit is inextricably tied to the success of Baltimore's students and families, and yet access to transit in this city, like so many other things, is deeply inequitable, too often distributed along the expected lines of race and class.

For decades, the lack of reliable, frequent, and safe public transit has interfered with students' ability to access their education equitably.

As cited in the Fund For Educational Excellence's report, Not in Service, students traveling to school today feel unsafe on transit, and late buses too frequently cause students to arrive late to school. This tardiness results in lost learning time and impacts student performance and academic standing in school. Additionally, many students pass up extracurricular opportunities like internships, jobs, sports, or clubs because they are concerned about traveling in the dark.

School communities deserve to see tangible improvement in public transit safety, reliability, and efficiency. It is for this reason that we ask the General Assembly to launch a study to better address the root causes of transit inequity for Baltimore City Schools students.

We believe that our legislators should be bolder in their approach to eradicate transit barriers for our students.

The workgroup created by this bill will explore innovative solutions to address student concerns with transit frequency and reliability which include additions to the fleet and bus driver increases. Additionally, we see the opportunity to expand Career and Technical Education (CTE) programming at Baltimore City schools to include career opportunities as bus operators and mechanics. Finally, by providing an incentive for students and families who are willing to carpool it offers some relief for buses on routes with high frequency that are often over capacity. It also defrays the costs for families that transport children to school with their own personal vehicle.

As such, we ask the committee to issue a favorable report on House Bill 1055. **We need to elevate** transformational change over incremental gains – especially for transit issues that have disadvantaged Baltimore City students for decades.

With Urgency -

Natasha Escobar, Executive Chair Baltimoreans for Educational Equity (BEE)

Roger Schulman, President and CEO Fund for Educational Excellence

Shamoyia Gardiner, Executive Director Strong Schools Maryland

HB 1055 - Transportation - Student Transportation Uploaded by: Dawana Sterrette

Position: FWA

BALTIMORE CITY public schools

BALTIMORE CITY BOARD OF SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS

Testimony of the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners In Support with Amendments House Bill 1055 Baltimore City – Maryland Transit Administration Transit Services for Public School Students

March 8, 2022

The Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners supports with amendments House Bill 1055 which provides for ridership on transit vehicles to any Baltimore City Public School student.

Unlike other school districts in the state, but similar to other urban school districts across the country, Baltimore City Public Schools (City Schools) uses the state transit system for students that must travel to school more than a mile from their homes. There are approximately 33,000 students eligible to ride Maryland Transit Authority (MTA) in City Schools. In 2017, legislation passed that allowed for MTA to provide ridership to eligible City School students for 5 years. The legislation has sunset. The need for the continuation of the funding is necessary, considering the chronic underfunding of City Schools.

The current Blueprint legislation, while delayed one year, will help with the chronic underfunding of City Schools because it recognizes concentration of poverty, but will not resolve all funding issues, as it is a 10 year plan and the school children had to forgo many resources over decades due to lack of funding.

When Consultants presented the final Adequacy Study Report to the Kirwan Commission in December 2016, the study revealed that Baltimore City Schools needed an additional \$358 million annually to ensure an adequate education for Baltimore's students. Similarly, an analysis conducted by the state's own Department of Legislative Services found during this same time period that if the inflation factor not been eliminated from the current education funding formula, an additional \$290 million per year would have been available to adequately educate Baltimore's children.

Under the current fee for service contract with MTA, students receive a nontransferable monthly pass which allows them to use MTA. The pass is called a One Card. Under the current contract with MTA, eligible students can ride from 5a.m. to 8 pm.

The proposed legislation would have a positive fiscal impact on City Schools. As drafted, it allows for approximately eligible Baltimore students to have hassle-free access to travel to and from school using MTA. Currently, an average of 22,000 use MTA daily.

As for the carpooling we ask that due to safety concerns and liability imposed by having a state and city sanctioned carpooling program that The State Department of Transportation and City Schools work together to report back to the General Assembly if a carpooling program can be administered and the report should consider any state, federal and local regulations and laws that may need to be modified or developed. The report shall be due to the General Assembly by December 31, 2022.

For the foregoing reasons, the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners supports House Bill 1055 with amendments and urges a favorable report.

Dawana Merritt Sterrette, Esq Director, Governmental and Legislative Relations 443-250-0190

Melissa Broome Director, Policy and Legislative Affairs 443-525-3038

HB1055 - MTA - Student Transportation and Carpooli Uploaded by: Patricia Westervelt

Position: INFO



Larry Hogan Governor Boyd K. Rutherford Lt. Governor James F. Ports, Jr. Secretary

March 8, 2022

The Honorable Maggie McIntosh Chair, House Appropriations Committee 121 House Office Building Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Letter of Information – House Bill 1055 – Transportation – Student Transportation – Transit Buses and Carpooling

Dear Chair McIntosh and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) takes no position on House Bill 1055 but offers the following for the Committee's information.

House Bill 1055 would require the Maryland Department of Transportation Maryland Transit Administration (MDOT MTA) to provide both tangible and digital transit passes to any middle and high school students in Baltimore City and would prohibit any restrictions on the passes. The MDOT MTA would also be required to allow any person who appears to be under the age of 22 to ride the bus without a pass and further requires the MDOT MTA bus operators to stop for pregnant individuals, mothers with young children, and students. The legislation also mandates the purchase of 100 new buses for the MDOT MTA's fleet each year between FY23 and FY26, and a \$1 per hour wage increase for operators each year between FY23 and FY27. Finally, House Bill 1055 establishes a carpool incentive program administered by the MDOT.

Currently, the MDOT MTA provides free transit services to Baltimore City Public School System (BCPSS) students. The Student Smart Card allows students to take up to four trips per school day and may be used on regular school days only, Monday through Friday, from 5:00am to 8:00pm. Smart cards are not valid on weekends, BCPSS recognized holidays, or other days when schools are closed. Each trip allows students 120 minutes of unlimited transfers. This is a pass on the student ID, which is a blank white CharmCard specifically programmed for BCPSS and printed with Student ID information furnished by BCPSS. These services should not be construed as "school bus service" as this practice is in violation of federal regulations and is banned by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

Under House Bill 1055, the MDOT MTA would be prohibited from placing any restrictions on these passes, including those described above, and would be required to provide both physical and digital IDs to students. The MDOT MTA does not have access to a Baltimore City School database to determine eligibility and any access to such a database raises concerns regarding the sharing of a minors' personally identifiable information (PII). The MDOT MTA does not have the equipment or resources to mass produce the high volume of photo identification cards required to support every student in Baltimore City.

The Honorable Maggie McIntosh Page Two

House Bill 1055 also calls for the establishment of a carpool incentive program; however, the MDOT funds and partners with Commuter Connections, the transportation demand management organization which covers both the Washington and Baltimore regions. Additionally, there is currently a school carpool program in place called SchoolPool, which is a part of Commuter Connections' services. SchoolPool is an on-demand service to assist parents residing in the same neighborhoods to connect with each other to form carpools, walking, and biking groups to and from school. Commuter Connections manages a registration portal and database of participating schools and families.

The MDOT MTA has launched CharmPass, a mobile app for customers, that requires the user to have a smart phone to access a pass product through the app. Accounts in CharmPass do not incorporate photo identification or specify the school of enrollment to enforce ridership eligibility. It is important to note that the MDOT MTA would also have to provide these passes to any student in Baltimore City, not just those enrolled in Baltimore City Public schools. Providing these passes to other private school institutions in Baltimore City would require establishing individual contractual agreements with each institution.

House Bill 1055 also mandates that transit buses stop for pregnant individuals, mothers with young children, and individuals who appear under 22 years of age. It is not clear if this legislation intends for operators to stop at a designated bus stop, or if it would require an operator to stop along other areas of the route. All MDOT MTA bus operators are trained to stop at every bus stop where a patron is waiting and are trained to use discretion when identifying eligibility based on age. Further, MDOT MTA buses have capacity requirements, and it is unclear if an operator would be required to remove someone already on the bus to accommodate these additional riders if the bus is at full capacity. These requirements create safety, traffic, operational, and logistical challenges and may result in degradation to on-time performance.

House Bill 1055 requires the MDOT MTA to purchase an additional 100 buses for service in Baltimore City each year from 2023 to 2026, for a total of 400 additional buses. This represents more than a 50 percent increase in the MDOT MTA's core bus fleet and would require construction of at least two additional storage and maintenance facilities. Acquiring property and completing design, environmental review, permitting, and construction of new bus depots is, at minimum, a seven-year process. Without these facilities to accommodate the proposed increase in fleet size, it would be extremely challenging to store the buses, complete mandated preventive maintenance and inspections, daily washing, cleaning, and vaulting activities, and dispatch the fleet. Furthermore, the FTA mandates that transit agencies maintain a spare ratio of no more than 20 percent of the fleet size needed in peak service. As is standard in the industry, the MDOT MTA currently maintains a spare ratio close to the 20 percent limit. Additional buses added to the fleet, therefore, must be accompanied by a proportional increase in peak service to maintain compliance with this FTA mandate. The Honorable Maggie McIntosh Page Three

The legislation also dictates that bus operators be given a \$1 per hour increase every year between FY 2023 and FY 2027. Wage rates for bus operators are subject to collective bargaining and establishes ATU Local 1300 as the bus operators' collective bargaining representative. Legislation that attempts to dictate wages interferes with both the State and the unions' ability to collectively bargain. Furthermore, the MDOT MTA's pay for bus operators is already among the highest in a group of comparable transit agencies. By legislating a set wage for bus operators, House Bill 1055 usurps the MDOT MTA's ability to engage in collective bargaining and conflicts with current law.

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests that the Committee consider this information while deliberating House Bill 1055.

Respectfully submitted,

Dave Myers Director of Government Affairs Maryland Transit Administration 410-767-0820 Pilar Helm Director of Government Affairs Maryland Department of Transportation 410-865-1090