



*Our mission is to enhance the quality of life for Worcester County citizens 50 years and older.
Our vision is to provide programs and services that promote active, independent and healthy lifestyles.*

SUBJECT: **Bill:** Senate SB0838: Education – Transportation – Elderly and Handicapped Transportation Service – County Funding

Position: SUPPORT

Dear Chair Guzzone, Vice-Chair Rosapepe, and Members of the Committee:

I write in support of Senate Bill 838, which would place funding for the Statewide Specialized Transportation Assistance Program (SSTAP) on a more sustainable basis and provide protection from the continuing cost increases we face in providing community transportation.

I am the Development Director for the Worcester Commission on Aging and would like to tell you about the need for this program in Worcester County. Worcester County has the second fastest growing population in Maryland of seniors. These seniors are aging in place but need transportation to medical appointments and other shopping trips. Many of these seniors have come from other areas and their family is not available to help. The Worcester Commission on Aging provides this needed transportation service along with many other services to keep these seniors in their homes. We work closely with the Maryland Department on Aging and Worcester County Health Department to make sure seniors in Worcester County continues to have a good quality of life as they age. Because of our programs including SSTAP we feel that many of these seniors stay off of higher costing programs that are state funded while they contribute to the state tax base.

Without the SSTAP program many of the seniors would just not be able to stay at home. Unlike metropolitan areas the options for transportation in slim. Even if there is an option the companies will not assist the senior out of their home and to the vehicle which most of our riders need. This program also helps other programs in our area like EMS, Department of Social Services, and other non-profits.

I fully support and strongly urge a favorable report for Senate Bill 838's efforts to increase support for the mobility of the senior citizens and disabled persons in my community.

Sincerely,

Rob Hart

Development Director

Worcester Commission on Aging

**Community for Life • Worcester Adult Medical Day Services • Senior Care • Senior Ride • Meal On Wheels
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