

SB0862 - 3.10.22 -- Baltimore City Maryland Trans

Uploaded by: Donald Fry

Position: FAV



POSITION STATEMENT

TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE SENATE BUDGET AND TAXATION COMMITTEE

**SENATE BILL 862 – BALTIMORE CITY – MARYLAND TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION –
TRANSIT SERVICES FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS**

Sponsor – Senator McCray

March 10, 2022

**DONALD C. FRY
PRESIDENT & CEO
GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE**

Position: Support

Senate Bill 862 would require the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) to provide rides on its transit system to any eligible Baltimore City Public Schools (City Schools) student. Services must be provided from 5 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily for school-related or educational extra-curricular activities, on or off school grounds.

Seventy-three percent of the City Schools middle and high school student population rely on the MTA to get to school and school-related activities, which accounts for 18% of MTA's annual ridership of core service. Currently, City Schools reimburse the MTA for rides taken by its students. Each student is permitted only two trips per day. For the last four years, the State has provided City Schools with the funds to reimburse the MTA. For the first three years, the funding was provided as part of legislation guiding the transition to the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. Due to pandemic funding concerns and the delayed implementation of the Blueprint, the State continued the payment for the current school year.

Senate Bill 862 would simplify the process of counting student rides and reimbursing the MTA. It would also ensure that students have access to transportation for the school day, after school activities, and internship opportunities. The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) contends that participation in work-based learning opportunities is crucial to prepare students for future careers. Participation in such opportunities or in educational extra-curricular activities should not be limited to those who can afford to pay for transportation.

In June 2021, the Fund for Educational Excellence released its report, "Not in Service: Why Public Transit Must Aim to Serve Students." The report described the inadequacy of the current program for many City School students. Not only do many students need more than two rides per day, but the current MTA system is inadequate to properly meet the needs of student riders.

The report recommended that City Schools, the City of Baltimore, and the MTA work together to redesign the transportation model for students. Eliminating the limit on the number of student rides per day and simplifying the accounting process is an excellent start. Once this is accomplished, the MTA should explore other ways to improve the system for student riders, including more frequent buses, improving safety at stops, and creating a digital pass for students.

For all of these reasons, the GBC respectfully requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 862.

The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) is a non-partisan, independent, regional business advocacy organization comprised of hundreds of businesses -- large, medium and small -- educational institutions, nonprofit organizations and foundations located in Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, and Howard counties as well as Baltimore City. The GBC is a 67-year-old, private-sector membership organization with a rich legacy of working with government to find solutions to problems that negatively affect our competitiveness and viability.

GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE

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SB862 MTA-Transit Services for Public School Stude

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 Senate Bill 862 Baltimore City – Maryland Transit Administration Transit Services for Public School Students

March 10, 2022

The Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners supports Senate Bill 862 which provides ridership on transit vehicles to any Baltimore City Public School student from fiscal year 2023 through fiscal year 2027 (5 years).

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. In 2017, when legislation was first passed to provide for MTA to provide transit services, there were approximately 30,000 students eligible to ride Maryland Transit Authority (MTA) in City Schools. With the current underfunding of City Schools, the necessity of MTA to continue to provide ridership is essential.

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. The estimated cost savings if students ride MTA free is \$6.1 million to the school system.

The school board request one minor amendment to the legislation. The first is to change the SMART CARD listed in the legislation to the ONE CARD.

For the foregoing reasons, the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners supports Senate Bill 862 and urges a favorable report.

Amendment

Page 2, line 7 replace SMART with ONE

Dawana Merritt Sterrette, Esq
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SB862 MTA-Transit Services for Public School Stude

Uploaded by: Jacinta Hughes

Position: FWA

BALTIMORE CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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SB0862 - MTA - Student Transit Passes - LOI_FINAL.

Uploaded by: Molly O'Hara

Position: INFO



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

March 10, 2022

The Honorable Guy Guzzone
Chairman, Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
3 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Letter of Information – Senate Bill 862 – Transportation - Student Transportation - Transit Buses and Carpooling

Dear Chairman Guzzone and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) takes no position on Senate Bill 862 but offers the following information for the Committee's consideration.

Senate Bill 862 requires the MDOT Maryland Transit Administration (MDOT MTA) to provide transit services free of charge to eligible students within Baltimore City Public Schools (BCPSS) and would prohibit the MDOT MTA from collecting reimbursement from BCPSS for these services through fiscal year 2027.

The MDOT MTA has been providing free transit services to BCPSS students since the passage of Senate Bill 1149 in 2017. While the law abrogated in June 2021, the MDOT MTA continues to provide free Student Smart Cards to eligible 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 Saturdays, Sundays, Baltimore City Public School holidays, or days when schools are closed. Each trip allows students 120 minutes of unlimited transfers. BCPSS is the only jurisdiction in the State that does not operate and fund its own transportation system for its students and instead partners with the MDOT MTA to provide these services free of charge.

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee consider this information when deliberating Senate Bill 862.

Respectfully submitted,

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