



## **SB617**

### **Maryland Transit Administration – Fare Price Requirements – Alterations**

**Testimony before the House Appropriations Committee**

**Hearing March 29, 2023**

**Position: Favorable**

Dear Delegate Barnes, Delegate Chang, and members of the committee, my name is Elizabeth Fixsen, and I represent the 700+ members of Indivisible Howard County. Indivisible Howard County is an active member of the Maryland Legislative Coalition (with 30,000+ members). We are providing written testimony today in **support of SB617**, changing the terms under which the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) can increase fares.

This bill will prevent unnecessary fare increases that penalize workers who rely on public transportation. Instead automatically adjusting fares according to the consumer price index every two years, the bill allows the MTA to adjust fares to meet realistic needs through a normal public hearing process.

Across the nation, transit riders are disproportionately low-income and people of color, and they depend on transit to access healthcare, employment, education, and social connection. Such workers include healthcare workers, transit operators, grocery clerks, and janitors, and others who are essential to a well-functioning society. Roughly one-third of day pass riders and 10 percent of one-way fare ticket holders in Maryland are low-income residents, according to MTA data. Fare increases add pressure to the household budgets of such workers who are already struggling with the effects of inflation. The fare hike could be the difference between somebody getting on the bus for work or not.

When fare increases reduce ridership, local governments may reduce subsidies, leading to cuts in service. This is a vicious cycle that not only harms workers who rely on public transportation, but it also undermines the goal of increased use of public transportation as a means of combatting climate change.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

**We respectfully urge a favorable report.**

Elizabeth Fixsen  
Savage, MD

*Sources cited:* <https://www.wypr.org/wypr-news/2022-06-23/maryland-transit-riders-will-pay-more-for-buses-trains>