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**SB 465 - Transportation - Commission to Study Establishing a
Baltimore Regional Transit Authority
Senate Budget and Taxation
March 1, 2023**

SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

Donna S. Edwards

President

Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO

Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of SB 465 with amendments. My name is Donna S. Edwards, and I am the President of the Maryland State and District of Columbia AFL-CIO. On behalf of Maryland's 300,000 union members, I offer the following comments.

SB 465 creates a commission that will study and make recommendations on the creation of a new Baltimore Regional Transit Authority. The composition of study commissions have long term effects on their recommendations. We applaud the inclusion of transit labor representatives on the study commission but do not understand why their seat is non-voting. The decisions of this study group will have a massive impact on the thousands of members of ATU Local 1300. It seems unnecessary to downgrade the seat of the very people with the day to day expertise of how MTA works in Baltimore to a non-voting member of the commission. Last year's HB 1336, passed by both the House of Delegates and Senate, included a full voting seat for ATU Local 1300. Two transit worker representatives fully participated in the Baltimore Metropolitan Council's Transit Governance and Funding Workgroup that was initiated after Governor Hogan's veto of HB 1336.

Transit system re-organizations are complicated and labor organizations, like ATU Local 1300, can provide essential expertise and institutional knowledge. Simple changes or proposals that may seem innocent can have disastrous effects for the working conditions, pension obligations, or federal funding eligibility of a new transit system. Transit workers deserve a full voice and vote at the table, especially when it is their future careers this commission is discussing.

We propose striking, "*As a nonvoting member,*" from Line 3 of Page 2 of SB 465. If amended, we urge the committee to issue a favorable report.