



Testimony

SB19/HB9 Equity in Transportation Sector – Guidelines and Analyses Act of 2023

Position: FAVORABLE

To Chair Griffith, and Members of the Senate Finance Committee; To Chair Barve, and Members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee:

My name is Ricarra Jones and I am the Political Director of 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East. We are the largest healthcare workers union in the United States, with over 10,000 members in Maryland and Washington DC. Our union supports SB19/HB9 and asks your committees to issue favorable reports. Public transportation should be both affordable and equitable, and this bill is critical to achieving those goals.

1199SEIU members provide healthcare to our loved ones and save lives on the frontlines of the ongoing COVID19 pandemic every day. Healthcare workers ability to provide high quality care for millions of Marylanders is often negatively impacted by unreliable public transportation. Many of our members have no “grace period” for tardiness, which leads to them being disciplined if they are only one minute late to work. It is essential that caring for a patient is not stalled due to a worker having unreliable transportation and as such, the State must make it a priority for healthcare workers and other essential workers to utilize dependable transportation. There is a critical short staffing crisis across the healthcare industry in Maryland. We cannot afford for good healthcare workers to lose their jobs simply because they can’t get to work. Additionally, Maryland has the longest hospital wait times in the country, making it even more important that hospital workers have transportation that is punctual.

Furthermore, unreliable or non-existent public transportation disproportionately impacts Black & Brown communities where many of our members live. SB19/HB9 seeks to rectify this injustice. We urge the Senate Finance Committee and House Environment and Transportation Committee to vote **YES** on this bill. Thank you.

In Unity,

Ricarra Jones
Political Director 1199SEIU UHE
443-844-6513, ricarra.jones@1199.org