



**HB341 – Transportation - Statewide Transportation
Improvement Programs and Transportation Improvement
Programs - Equity Impacts**

Testimony before

House Appropriations Committee

February 21, 2023

Position: Favorable

Mr. Chair, Mr. Vice Chair and members of the committee, my name is Virginia Smith, and I represent the 750+ members of Indivisible Howard County. We are providing written testimony today in **support of HB341**, which would require the Dept of Transportation to include how programs would impact low-income and minority communities. Indivisible Howard County is an active member of the Maryland Legislative Coalition (with 30,000+ members). We appreciate the leadership of Delegate Lewis in sponsoring this important legislation.

There have been multiple studies and articles demonstrating that while public transit and infrastructure are often built through communities of color, they do not benefit from these systems. As stated in an article from Rice University Kinder Institute for Urban Research, there tend to be two separate transit systems in this country and in Maryland where the affluent (and often White) citizens benefit from on-time and comfortable systems, while poorer (and sadly often Black) citizens have inconsistent services with stops far and few between. They often have to transfer multiple times to reach their final destination. Meanwhile the nicer systems run through their communities, so they must suffer the health impacts. This bill will attempt to equalize this disparity by requiring low-income and minority communities are included by the Department of Transportation in the statewide transportation improvement program analyses.

For these reasons, we support HB341.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

We respectfully urge a favorable report.

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