

(Opening)

Good Afternoon Madam Chair Pena-Melnyk, Madam Vice Chair Cullison, and members of the Health and Government Operations committee.

I am Senator Arthur Ellis representing the 28th Legislative District of Maryland, Charles County.

I am here today to present **Senate Bill 511 – Health and Human Services Transportation Improvement Act of 2023.**

The purpose of this bill is to repeal the \$500,000 cap on the amount of grants that may be awarded by the Maryland Transit Administration under the Maryland Senior Rides Program; repealing the \$400,000 cap on funding for the Job Access and Reverse Commute Program; establishing the State Coordinating Committee for Health and Human Services Transportation to examine the transportation needs of residents of the State who are elderly, have a disability, or require transportation to access jobs, medical and other health-related appointments, and certain programs; etc.

According to testimony from the Maryland Association of Counties (MACo), “This bill would create the Rural Nonemergency Medical Transportation Program and provide resources for nonprofits operating nonemergency medical transportation networks in rural counties. Counties recognize the importance of both emergency and nonemergency medical transportation. In 2022, MACo adopted as one of its legislative initiatives realigning emergency medical service (EMS) funding for the modern era. This initiative was successful in raising the Medicaid reimbursement for EMS by 50% and commissioning a study to look at, among other things, how to better handle emergency and nonemergency interfacility transport. While just as critical to maintaining public health, historically, nonemergency medical transportation has been largely overshadowed by EMS. The link between service providers

and their patients – many of whom require maintenance visits for kidney dialysis or similar care – faces a persistent shortfall in funding as these services lie outside the realm of governmental insurance coverage. In some cases, counties have filled this gap to ensure the safety and health of their residents, but this current patchwork is unsustainable and insufficient. By investing in these nonprofits directly, providers more readily focus on their mission: providing critical medical transportation in areas of need.”

(Closing)

Thank you to Madam Chair Pena-Melnyk, Madam Vice Chair Cullison for the opportunity to present **Senate Bill 511, Health and Human Services Transportation Improvement Act of 2023** and I ask for your favorable report.