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Written Testimony
Senate Bill 331 - Task Force to Study Paratransit in Maryland
Finance Committee – February 7, 2024
Support

Background: Senate Bill 331 would establish the Task Force to Study Paratransit in Maryland, which would study paratransit in the State, including current, needed, and expected funding for paratransit; reasons for current funding and spending gaps; and the role public-private partnerships could play in meeting funding and service gaps. The Task Force will be required to report its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly on or before June 30, 2025.

Written Comments: The Baltimore Jewish Council represents The Associated: Jewish Federation of Baltimore and all of its agencies. This includes the Jewish Connection Network, which has an entire department dedicated to ensuring that every member of our community, regardless of their background or abilities, can fully embrace Jewish life.

According to the 2020 Community Study, 14% of our community has a disability or medical condition that limits their ability to work or attend school. Paratransit programs are "origin to destination" services for people with disabilities who are not able to ride fixed-route public transportation. By studying the current gaps in services for those in need across the state, we can find ways to better support our community members in need of assistance.

Millions of individuals with disabilities and their families depend on a wide variety of public benefits for income, health care, and food and housing assistance. Paratransit is another way that we can help support those in the disability community by allowing them to feel independent. Using this task force to ensure that we are meeting the needs of one of our underserved communities is crucial.

For these reasons, the Baltimore Jewish Councils asks for a favorable report on SB331.

The Baltimore Jewish Council, a coalition of central Maryland Jewish organizations and congregations, advocates at all levels of government, on a variety of social welfare, economic and religious concerns, to protect and promote the interests of The Associated Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore, its agencies and the Greater Baltimore Jewish community.