

ROBBYN LEWIS
Legislative District 46
Baltimore City

Health and Government Operations
Committee

Subcommittees

Health Occupations and Long Term Care
Public Health and Minority
Health Disparities

House Chair

Joint Committee on Program Open Space
and Agricultural Land Preservation



The Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 424
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3772 · 301-858-3772
800-492-7122 Ext. 3772
Robbyn.Lewis@house.state.md.us

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony in Support of HB107 - Vehicle Laws - Bus Lane Obstruction - Monitoring Systems Expansion and Workgroup (Better Bus Service Act of 2024)

Thank you Chair Korman, Vice-Chair Boyce, and members of the Environment and Transportation Committee, I am Delegate Robbyn Lewis testifying on behalf of HB107 which will deliver better bus service throughout Maryland.

I introduced a similar bill in 2023 as HB1027; that bill was heard, but did not move forward.

HB107 is state-wide legislation that will enable transit agencies to use bus-mounted, forward-facing camera technology to monitor obstructions to protect the movement of buses on Dedicated Bus Lanes (DBLs).

I devoted the interim to working hard to improve it, meeting and discussing with all stakeholders, including the Maryland Transit Administration and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority. I organized and led a half-day transit tour in Baltimore for nearly 20 legislators to share information about Dedicated Bus Lanes and transit service challenges. I also learned from fellow legislators who shared concerns about risks associated with camera surveillance. (The bill before you incorporates best practices for privacy protection, which was an important concern raised last year.) I talked with technology experts, and researched and adapted ideas from states and localities that are currently using bus-mounted, forward facing camera technology to deliver significantly improved bus service. The bill before you synthesizes those inputs into a proposal that will, with modest investment, deliver significantly improved bus service for the people of Maryland.

Bus service matters because the bus is the workhorse of our mass transit system. Buses are the most cost-effective transit mode. They stitch together entire networks of human movement. Every week, hundreds of thousands of front-line health care and retail workers, people with disabilities, and many middle- and high-school students depend on them utterly. These Marylanders deserve to have the best service. This bill will help deliver it.

HB107 sounds familiar to some of you, but it does something new. In 2022 the General Assembly passed HB53, a local bill that enabled Baltimore City to use stationary, “wayside” cameras to enforce Dedicated Bus Lanes. The bill before you is statewide, not local. Furthermore, it enables not clunky cameras lumbering on the side of the road, but rather small cameras that are fixed on inside of the bus, facing outward, looking at the lane to identify

obstacles that block the buses movement, and prevent all of the people riding from reaching their destination in a timely manner.

Of course, there are allowed uses of Dedicated Bus Lanes by other vehicles; this bill takes account of those. For example, vehicles that are moving in the lane in order to make a right turn are certainly allowed. But no vehicles may park or stop on these lanes, nor may they block the transit stops along these lanes.

Please note I do have a few very minor sponsor amendments which, I believe, will further strengthen the bill. These clarify that parking and stopping are prohibited on Dedicated Bus Lanes and at transit stops; simplify language about the personnel who review footage and issue citations; and move the reporting requirement later.

Thank you for your consideration. I respectfully request a favorable report on HB107.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Lewis", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Delegate Robbyn Lewis

District 46, Baltimore City

Maryland House of Delegates

6 Bladen St. Room 424

Annapolis, MD 21401

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