

Subject: Support of HB1199/SB891

Date: February 29, 2024

From: National Federation of the Blind of Maryland

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To: House Environment and Transportation Committee

Members of the National Federation of the Blind of Maryland urge the members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee to support HB1199/SB891. This bill requires an independent study of MobilityLink by the Maryland Transportation Institute at the University of Maryland. This study will be very thorough, looking at everything from services to the customers to workforce morale and working conditions. Costs cannot be the only thing considered, MobilityLink must provide quality services. It is time for the governor and the General Assembly to commit to the recommendations that will come from this report.

The key word is independent. Many studies do not require sufficient research of other successful systems and fail to get the desired results of reform. By seeking the input of users, this study will avoid bias and will lead to a better system that will make the promise of the Americans with Disabilities Act a reality. The current system holds users in bondage leading to missed medical appointments and care, demotions or even loss of employment, the opportunity for an education and to participate in community activities. Freedom of movement is as important to persons with disabilities as it is to the rest of society.

Many elderly people are also persons with disabilities. Too often they are subject to lives of isolation and loneliness. A vote for HB1199/SB891 can bring the elderly and persons with disabilities a chance to live the life we want. Please vote in favor of HB1199/SB891.