



MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

February 25, 2025

House Bill 450

**Maryland Transit Administration - Disability Reduced Fare Program - Renewal
for Permanently Disabled Individuals**

House Appropriations and Environment and Transportation Committee

Position: Favorable

The Maryland Catholic Conference (MCC) is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals, and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

House Bill 450 requires the Maryland Transit Administration to automatically renew the Disability Reduced Fare Program certification of an enrollee who is permanently disabled.

This legislation aims to ensure the full integration of individuals with permanent disabilities into society by addressing a critical barrier: access to transportation. Many people with disabilities actively participate in their communities through appointments and social activities. However, they often face unique challenges, such as the need to attend medical appointments more frequently than individuals without disabilities. Reduced fare programs are essential for promoting equity, as they allow individuals with permanent disabilities to access necessary healthcare and social engagements without being hindered by socioeconomic barriers. While the Maryland Transit Administration offers reduced fare options, requiring individuals with permanent disabilities to repeatedly reapply is an unnecessary burden. Permanent disabilities, by definition, typically do not improve without extraordinary medical intervention or miraculous events.

For individuals classified as permanently and totally disabled—those unable to engage in substantial work due to the severity of their condition—income is often significantly reduced.¹ These further underscores the need for continuous reduced fare eligibility. Eliminating the need for repeated applications would streamline access, reduce administrative hurdles, and uphold the dignity of those affected. By ensuring that reduced fare benefits for individuals with

¹ <https://www.warnkenlaw.com/law/workers-compensation/permanent-disability-awards/#:~:text=See%20additional%20permanent%20partial%20disability,Sobin:>

permanent disabilities are continuous, Maryland can promote greater equity, enhance access to essential services, and affirm the inherent value and dignity of every person.

For these reasons, the Maryland Catholic Conference asks for a favorable report on **HB 450**.

Thank you for your consideration.