



# *The Harford Center, Inc.*

*"Serving the needs of Harford County adults with developmental disabilities since 1961."*

**Bill:** Senate Bill 20: Maryland Transit Administration - Locally Operated Transit Systems - Mandatory Funding

**Position:** SUPPORT

Dear Chair Guzzone, Vice-Chair Rosapepe, and Members of the Committee:

I write on behalf of The Harford Center, Inc in support of Senate Bill 20, which would increase funding for Locally Operated Transit Systems (LOTS) throughout our state.

The Harford Center, Inc. is a non-profit organization that has been providing day and employment services to adults with developmental disabilities in Harford County since 1961. We currently serve 100 adults with varying needs and abilities. A central tenant of our services is community integration. Everyone needs and deserves to be connected to their community. Additionally, we are mandated by governing regulations to provide every participant with the opportunity to be a part of the community every day. We maintain a fleet of 22 buses and vans to support the transportation needs of our program. Each day, we transport participants from their homes to our building, and out into the community. Our transportation program is one of our largest expenses each year, and the cost continues to rise with the cost of fuel, maintenance and repairs.

State support for local transit is critical to ensure our goals of quality service, environmental protection, and equity are reached. As state funding has stagnated or decreased, our local matches for state and federal funding have taken on a greater and greater proportion of funding. Inflation has particularly hit our industry hard, with prices for vehicles increasing and the need for increased driver salaries to remain competitive. We need predictability in state funding streams to plan how to best serve the customers in our communities.

We fully support Senate Bill 20's efforts to increase support for the mobility of the citizens and communities we serve.

Sincerely,

Laura Weinstein  
Chief Development Officer  
The Harford Center, Inc.

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