



WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY

Public Testimony – Favorable With Amendment Support of HB1144

State Public Transit Service and Stations - Exclusion for Assault and Bodily Injury

Before the House Environment and Transportation Committee

February 20, 2025

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to testify today. For the record, my name is Charlie Scott, and I am the Senior Government Relations Officer for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA). I am here to urge your strong support for House Bill 1144 with amendments to clarify that this policy should apply to all transit systems in the state.

I thank Delegate Addison for sponsoring this legislation and for offering sponsor amendments to expand the applicability of this legislation to all transit systems in Maryland. For clarity, I am suggesting further amendments below.

At Metro, the fares we charge and the rules and regulations governing customers in our system are all established in an official tariff approved by the WMATA Board of Directors.

As part of our Annual Public Safety Initiatives Update shared with our Board Safety and Operations Committee on January 30, 2025, this very policy of banning repeat and egregious offenders was recommended as an industry best practice.

Our Board of Directors has the authority to amend our tariff to establish such a policy for Metrorail and Metrobus. We believe that additionally having this policy in state statute will further reinforce the message that for the safety of our customers and our employees, egregious offenders have no place in our system.

At Metro, we are currently conducting a peer analysis to inform the establishment of rule to ban repeat and egregious offenders and will bring this back to our Board of Directors for consideration and action this spring. As shared with our Board, our focus will be on offenders who have committed sex offenses and offenders who have assaulted Metro employees.

To further clarify that this bill should cover all transit systems in Maryland, I recommend the following modifications:

In all places where the bill references "state public transit service" or "state public transit service stations," change to "public transit service" or "public transit service

station.” Additionally, the definition of public transit service should be modified to delete the reference to public transit operated by the administration or another state agency.

(3) “STATE PUBLIC TRANSIT SERVICE” MEANS ANY OF THE FOLLOWING,
~~IF OPERATED BY THE ADMINISTRATION OR ANOTHER STATE AGENCY:~~

(I) BUS SERVICE;

(II) TRAIN SERVICE;

(III) LIGHT RAIL SERVICE; AND

(IV) SUBWAY SERVICE.

(4) “~~STATE PUBLIC TRANSIT SERVICE STATION~~” MEANS A STOP OR
STATION FOR STATE PUBLIC TRANSIT SERVICE.

With these amendments, we believe the ability to ban offenders is another tool we can deploy to improve the safety and security of our customers and our employees. For these reasons, I urge a favorable with amendment report.

WMATA Proposed Banning

Annual Public Safety Initiatives Update

- No current banning program
- Currently only courts can issue bans on the Metro system
 - Short duration only (e.g., 30 days)
 - Limited to station or bus line where offense occurs
- Best practice and recommendation
 - Implement a banning process for WMATA
 - Create a policy based on best practices, and Counsel oversight, that includes an appeal process
 - Run public education campaign
 - Ban repeat and egregious offenders:
 - Sex offenses
 - Employee assaults



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