

Subject: Favorable HB 0206: Bus Obstruction Monitoring Systems and Bus Stop Zones

Date: February 21, 2025

From: National Federation of the Blind of Maryland

15 Charles Plaza, #3002

President@nfbmd.org

To: House Environment and Transportation Committee

The Members of the National Federation of the Blind of Maryland urge the members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee to give HB 0206 a favorable report because ensures individuals with disabilities can travel safely and independently throughout their communities.

Bus monitoring systems bring technology that can be leveraged to enforce traffic rules and laws. These systems are already here, used very widely in the District of Columbia, and they are effective at determining who is violating traffic safety laws. Those individuals then receive a ticket in the mail, and that has proven to be an effective deterrence against future infractions.

People with disabilities disproportionately depend on the use of the public bus system to move about their communities, including going to work, medical appointments, church, school, and other places. However, drivers who stop, park, or stand in a bus lane infringe on the ability of individuals with disabilities to get on and off the bus. This is because when a bus stop is obstructed, the bus either does not stop at all, pulls up to the curb in a different place, or stops in the lane that is not a bus lane or against the curb.

An individual who is blind relies on the auditory announcement to know if this is there bus and when it has arrived. A person in a wheelchair relies on the bus stopping at the bus stop because the angles need to be right for the wheelchair lift to work.

When the bus doesn't stop in the right place or not at all, many passengers with disabilities can't board or debark at all and miss their bus, causing them to be late to their appointments, work, school, etc., or to not be able to go at all.

Similarly, when a curb cut is blocked, the disabled individual is essentially stranded and not able to cross a street, or if they can, they're walking in traffic which is unsafe.

This is a critical bill, a safety bill, and one that prevents disproportionate impacts on individuals with disabilities. Please vote favorable for HB 0206.

For questions, please contact me at 708-829-0523 or at President@nfbmd.org.