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**Written Testimony in Support of HB 1144  
State Public Transit Service and Stations – Exclusion for Assault and Bodily Injury  
Maryland House Environment and Transportation Committee  
February 20, 2025**

Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and Members of the Committee, AFT Maryland supports HB 1144, legislation that seeks to enhance the safety of Maryland’s public transit system by establishing clear consequences for individuals who commit acts of assault or intentional bodily injury while utilizing state public transit services. This bill is a necessary step to ensure that public transit remains a safe and reliable mode of transportation.

Every day, thousands of Marylanders rely on public transit to commute to work, school, medical appointments, and other essential activities. Transit operators, who serve as the backbone of our transportation system, should be able to perform their duties without fear of violence or harassment. Unfortunately, incidents of assault on public transit have become an increasing concern, putting both transit workers and passengers at risk. HB 1144 addresses this urgent issue by prohibiting individuals who commit acts of violence from using public transit for specified periods based on the severity and recurrence of their offenses.

Under HB 1144, individuals who assault a transit operator or passenger will face escalating penalties, including temporary exclusion from public transit services for first and second offenses, and a lifetime ban for repeated or weapon-involved assaults. Additionally, the bill includes provisions that allow the Secretary of Transportation or their designee to adjust exclusion periods as necessary, ensuring fairness and appropriate enforcement.

HB 1144 strikes the right balance between public safety and fairness. By ensuring that individuals who engage in violent behavior face real consequences, this bill will help create a more secure and welcoming environment on Maryland’s public transit system. Thank you.

