



Empowering People to Lead Systemic Change

1500 Union Ave., Suite 2000, Baltimore, MD 21211
Phone: 410-727-6352 | Fax: 410-727-6389
DisabilityRightsMD.org

House Bill 450
Maryland Transit Administration - Disability Reduced Fare Program -
Renewal for Permanently Disabled Individuals
Senate Finance Committee
March 26, 2025
Position: Support

Disability Rights Maryland (DRM) is Maryland's designated protection & advocacy agency, mandated to defend and advance the civil rights of people with disabilities. DRM submits this testimony in support of house bill 450, which requires the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) to automatically renew reduced fare certifications for Marylanders with permanent disabilities.

The MTA's disability reduced fare program allows transit riders with disabilities to pay a lower fare for all the MTA's modes of transportation. Accessible and affordable public transportation is essential for people with disabilities because they are less likely to drive and have access to a vehicle in their household compared to nondisabled people. The reduced fare program lowers the financial burden for people with disabilities, and makes it easier to move around their communities, go to work, attend school, seek medical care, and join social activities.

Currently, transit riders who have permanent disabilities must recertify their disability status every three years to maintain their reduced fare certification. Recertifying can be time-consuming, costly, and stressful for transit riders with disabilities. An individual must complete the recertification form and go to a medical provider to certify that they still have a permanent disability. They may have to pay a copay and transit fare to go to that appointment. All these hurdles create opportunities for their certification to expire and barriers to essential services.

HB 450 removes this burden for transit riders with permanent disabilities. It requires the MTA to automatically renew certifications for people enrolled in the program with permanent disabilities and develop regulations to carry out this process. This legislation is a crucial step toward enhancing the quality of life for Marylanders with disabilities by ensuring uninterrupted access to affordable public transportation. When public transit systems are accessible and affordable, individuals with disabilities can

engage fully with their communities, which fosters social connections, enhances economic opportunities, and contributes to the overall vitality of our society.

DRM requests the committee to favorably consider HB 450. This legislation will remove unnecessary barriers, promote independence, and facilitate the full participation of individuals with disabilities in our communities. By enacting this bill, Maryland will set a commendable example in advancing the rights and well-being of people with disabilities.

For the reasons above, we support house bill 450. Thank you for considering this legislation. Please do not hesitate to contact me at DariaP@DisabilityRightsMD.org or (443) 692-2487.

Respectfully submitted,

Daria Pugh, Esq.
Staff Attorney
Disability Rights Maryland