

HB450. Senate. The Arc Maryland.Support.pdf

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Position: FAV



Senate Finance

**HB 450: Maryland Transit Administration – Disability Reduced Fare Program –
Renewal for Permanently Disabled Individuals**

March 26, 2025

Position: Support

The Arc Maryland is a statewide advocacy organization for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. We work to protect and advance the rights of people with disabilities and to make it possible for people with developmental disabilities to live the lives they want with the support they need. As such, we support HB 450 because we believe it will reduce unnecessary burdens for people with disabilities. In Maryland, 31% of individuals with disabilities own or drive a car, whether adapted or unadapted. This data suggests that approximately 69% of people with disabilities in Maryland do not drive.¹

WHAT currently happens with the Disability Reduced Fare Program in Maryland?

- People with disabilities are required to renew their eligibility for the Disability Reduced Fare Program every 3, 6, 9 months or 36 months (3 years), based on the judgement of a physician of how long the disability is expected to continue.
- All states are different in their processes for recertifying people with permanent disabilities. In both Washington DC and New York, individuals are required to recertify on at least a 5-year basis, while some states offer reduced fare transit for those with permanent disability status without the need for recertification²

WHAT does this legislation do?

¹ https://mdod.maryland.gov/pub/Documents/MDOD_SurveyData_2020-2023%20%282%29.pdf

² <https://www.whs.mil/Mass-Transportation-Benefit-Program/>
<https://www.valleytransit.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Reduced-Fare-Brochure.pdf>

- HB 450 states that the administration shall **automatically renew the Disability Reduced Fare Program Certification of an Enrollee who is Permanently Disabled**, AND create and adopt regulations to establish a process to carry out processes for oversight and compliance.

WHY is this legislation important?

- Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities by definition are life-long conditions that manifest before the age of 22. Once diagnosed, the person only needs a doctor to confirm their diagnosis to continue to be eligible for the reduced fare program.
- Maryland currently has one of the shortest eligibility periods of most states. Having to go to the doctor to complete forms for a condition that is unchanged/permanent is both a time, transportation, and cost burden to people with disabilities.
- There is no fiscal note. Actually, this law change should reduce administrative paperwork and burden on the state by allowing people who have permanently, reduced-fare qualifying disabilities to hold a permanent reduced-fare card.

The Arc Maryland urges a favorable report on HB 450.

For additional information, please contact:

Ande Kolp, Executive Director

akolp@thearcmd.org

DRM Testimony FAV HB 450 Disability Reduced Fare P

Uploaded by: Daria Pugh

Position: FAV



Empowering People to Lead Systemic Change

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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

Maryland Catholic Conference_FAV_HB450_SenateCross

Uploaded by: Diane Arias

Position: FAV



MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

March 26, 2025

House Bill 450

**Maryland Transit Administration - Disability Reduced Fare Program - Renewal
for Permanently Disabled Individuals
Senate Finance Committee**

Position: Favorable

The Maryland Catholic Conference (MCC) is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals, and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

House Bill 450 requires the Maryland Transit Administration to automatically renew the Disability Reduced Fare Program certification of an enrollee who is permanently disabled.

This legislation aims to ensure the full integration of individuals with permanent disabilities into society by addressing a critical barrier: access to transportation. Many people with disabilities actively participate in their communities through appointments and social activities. However, they often face unique challenges, such as the need to attend medical appointments more frequently than individuals without disabilities. Reduced fare programs are essential for promoting equity, as they allow individuals with permanent disabilities to access necessary healthcare and social engagements without being hindered by socioeconomic barriers. While the Maryland Transit Administration offers reduced fare options, requiring individuals with permanent disabilities to repeatedly reapply is an unnecessary burden. Permanent disabilities, by definition, typically do not improve without extraordinary medical intervention or miraculous events.

For individuals classified as permanently and totally disabled—those unable to engage in substantial work due to the severity of their condition—income is often significantly reduced.¹ These further underscores the need for continuous reduced fare eligibility. Eliminating the need for repeated applications would streamline access, reduce administrative hurdles, and uphold the dignity of those affected. By ensuring that reduced fare benefits for individuals with

¹ <https://www.warnkenlaw.com/law/workers-compensation/permanent-disability-awards/#:~:text=See%20additional%20permanent%20partial%20disability,Sobin:>

permanent disabilities are continuous, Maryland can promote greater equity, enhance access to essential services, and affirm the inherent value and dignity of every person.

For these reasons, the Maryland Catholic Conference asks for a favorable report on **HB 450**.

Thank you for your consideration.

Senate - Favorable - HB 450 - Del. Guyton.pdf

Uploaded by: Michele Guyton

Position: FAV

MICHELE GUYTON
Legislative District 42B
Baltimore County

Environment and Transportation
Committee



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 26, 2025

Favorable – HB 450

Maryland Transit Administration- Disability Reduced Fare Program-Renewal for Permanently Disabled Individuals

Dear Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Hayes, and Members of the Finance Committee,

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of HB 450 to ease the burden of people with permanent disability who use public transit. Every three years, people with long-term conditions must reapply for this program, which includes forms filled out by the person and their health care professional. There is no exemption category for people who are permanently disabled. The intent of this legislation is to ensure that if a healthcare professional attests that a person has a disability is not expected to improve, they will be automatically renewed for the discount.

I request a favorable report on HB450.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Delegate Michele Guyton".

Delegate Michele Guyton

HB0450-FIN-FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Nina Themelis

Position: FAV



BRANDON M. SCOTT
MAYOR

*Office of Government Relations
88 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401*

HB0450

March 26, 2025

TO: Members of the Senate Finance Committee

FROM: Nina Themelis, Director of Mayor's Office of Government Relations

RE: House Bill 450 - Maryland Transit Administration - Disability Reduced Fare Program - Renewal for Permanently Disabled Individuals

POSITION: Support

Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Hayes, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) respectfully requests a **favorable** committee report on House Bill (HB) 450.

HB 450 requires that the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) automatically renew the certification of a person eligible for the MTA's Disability Reduced Fare Program when such person is qualified for it by virtue of a permanent disability. This would make the program more accessible and eliminate the need for renewal for individuals whose disability status is unlikely to change.

At present, the certification process administered by the MTA, which requires an application with a verification by a healthcare professional, is good for a maximum of three years. The burden to file for new approval to the MTA's Disability Reduced Fare Program is redundant in the case of a person whose disability has already been verified as permanent. This change will therefore achieve two beneficial outcomes to the state and its residents: ensuring the benefit is more easily accessible and available those who are entitled to it and reduce the number of renewal applications MTA must review. To this end, HB 450 would not only eliminate the burden individuals living with permanent disabilities face when trying to utilize this program, but also reduce the administrative burden experienced by the MTA.

For these reasons, the BCA respectfully requests a **favorable** committee report on HB 450.

HB450.DDCouncil.Support.CF.pdf

Uploaded by: Rachel London

Position: FAV



Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

CREATING CHANGE • IMPROVING LIVES

Senate Finance Committee

HB 450: Maryland Transit Administration - Disability Reduced Fare Program - Renewal for
Permanently Disabled Individuals

March 26, 2025

Position: Support

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council (Council) is an independent, public policy organization that creates change to make it possible for people with developmental disabilities to live the lives they want with the support they need. From this perspective, the Council supports HB 450 as a step toward making Maryland a place where everyone can access transportation fairly and equitably.

WHAT does this legislation do?

- This bill requires the Maryland Transit Administration automatically renew the Disability Reduced Fare Program (Program) certification for a person who is permanently disabled.
- The program provides a 50% discount to people with disabilities, older adults (age 65+), and Medicare cardholders.
- Currently, the program requires people with long-term disabilities to renew their application every 36 months or be dis-enrolled.

WHY is this legislation important?

- People with Developmental Disabilities (DD) also people with permanent disabilities. This means their disability will not change with time or a particular treatment. For example, a person with Cerebral Palsy will have CP for their whole life.
- The current application process is burdensome for people with developmental disabilities. When people with a long-term disability have to renew their applications, they must have a doctor re-certify they still have a disability. This is an unnecessary process for people with permanent disabilities.
- People with developmental disabilities want and need access to transportation. The Bureau of Transportation Statistics reports that people with disabilities are four times more likely to experience difficulty getting the transportation they need compared to people without disabilities. Keeping the fares low and making renewals automatic helps Marylanders with DD get where they need to go with the Disability Reduced Fare Program.

Contact: Dr. Stephanie Dolamore, Deputy Director, sdolamore@md-council.org

HB0450 crossover FAV - Maryland Transit Administra

Uploaded by: Richard KAP Kaplowitz

Position: FAV

HB0450 Crossover
Bill_RichardKaplowitz_FAV
03/26/25
Richard Keith Kaplowitz
Frederick, MD 21703

TESTIMONY ON HB#/0450 - FAVORABLE

Maryland Transit Administration - Disability Reduced Fare Program - Renewal for Permanently Disabled Individuals

TO: Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and members of the Environment and Transportation Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard K. Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support with its amendments of cross over bill HB0450, **Maryland Transit Administration - Disability Reduced Fare Program - Renewal for Permanently Disabled Individuals**

The House version of bill HB0450 passed 138-1 on 03/17/25. There is no cross-filed bill.

To qualify for the disability reduced fare program “The applicant must, by reason of illness, injury, congenital malfunction, or other disability, which is expected to last 90 days or longer, be unable to utilize mass transit as effectively as others.”¹

This bill makes common sense, a person with a permanent disability should not have to renew their disability program qualifications due to that permanent nature of that disability. The bill would require the Maryland Transit Administration to automatically renew the Disability Reduced Fare Program certification of an enrollee who is permanently disabled.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on cross over bill HB#0450 and bring it to a vote in the Senate.

¹ <https://onestop.md.gov/licenses/disability-reduced-fare-certification-program-5d1540bf54f24d03e9998776>

HB450_NFB_FAV

Uploaded by: Sharon Maneki

Position: FAV

Subject: Favorable HB450 Maryland Transit Administration - Disability Reduced Fare Program -
Renewal for Permanently Disabled Individuals

Date: March 26, 2025

From: National Federation of the Blind of Maryland

15 Charles Plaza, #3002, Baltimore, MD 21201

president@nfbmd.org

To: Senate Finance Committee

The members of the National Federation of the Blind of Maryland urge the Senate Finance Committee to vote yes on HB450, a bill that will permit the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) to automatically renew the Disability Reduced Fare Program certification for permanently disabled people.

People who are blind are permanently disabled. This bill will save them valuable time and money because they will not have to go to the doctor, go in for an interview, etc. Of equal importance, this bill is a cost savings bill because the MTA will not have to employ personnel to take people off this system if they miss the certification deadline and to review the documents that are submitted by the customers. This bill is a win win for blind people and for the MTA. Please vote in favor of this bill because it will save both time and money for the individual and the state of Maryland.