



**THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES**  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**SUPPORT**

**HB1481- Disability Services – Adapted Vehicle Access Pilot Program – Established**

March 10, 2025

Chair Peña-Melnyk, Vice Chair Cullison, and members of the Health and Government Operations Committee,

**HB1481** creates a pilot program for providing Marylanders who are ambulatory disabled adapted vans. Mobility is more than the ability to move freely about a limited physical space unrestricted. In its fullest meaning, it includes the ability to independently move between physical spaces and localities. By providing adults who depend on wheelchairs long-term or permanently with vehicles adapted to allow them to drive, they will be able to move with greater independence and attain associated benefits.

While existing programs such as the Maryland Department of Disabilities (MDoD) **AT Low-interest Financial Loan Program** provide some individuals access to adapted vehicles, many individuals who would benefit are ineligible due to income thresholds or other restrictive criteria. (MDTAP Adapted Vehicle Funding Guide 2023. (2023). [https://mdod.maryland.gov/mdtap/Documents/Accessible - Adapted Vehicle Funding Guide 2023 \(1\).pdf](https://mdod.maryland.gov/mdtap/Documents/Accessible - Adapted Vehicle Funding Guide 2023 (1).pdf))

**HB1481** bill will help individuals not qualifying for other programs gain access to the adapted vehicles they need to live with greater independence and participate with fewer limitations in the workforce and their communities. The pilot program would prioritize individuals residing in areas with limited access to public transportation and is structured to be cost-effective and sustainable, leveraging donations of vehicles, modification services, and funding from public and private sources. Similar initiatives in other states have successfully improved mobility for people with disabilities while minimizing costs to taxpayers.

The bill also requires MDoD to conduct an impact study to determine if the pilot succeeds in:

- Expanding employment opportunities
- Increasing financial stability
- Reducing reliance on caregivers
- Reducing reliance on paratransit services
- Decreasing dependency on public subsidies
- Enhancing independence and thereby improving quality of life

Transportation remains one of the most significant barriers to employment, healthcare, daily activities, and independence for individuals regardless of their level of ability or disability, with individuals with disabilities being twice as likely as those without disabilities to lack access to transportation, significantly limiting their opportunities and independence. (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2019). Barriers to employment for people with a disability. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. <https://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2020/barriers-to-employment-for-people-with-a-disability.htm?>); (Data Analysis | Bureau of Transportation Statistics. (2011). [https://www.bts.gov/archive/publications/freedom\\_to\\_travel/data\\_analysis?](https://www.bts.gov/archive/publications/freedom_to_travel/data_analysis?))

**HB1481** is a step towards addressing a significant deficiency in our goal of ensuring every Marylander access to opportunity to meet their full potential. I urge a favorable report.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Terri L. Hill'.