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HB 58 Transportation – Paratransit Services – Interjurisdictional Routes
House Environment and Transportation Committee
February 5, 2026
FAVORABLE

Chair Korman, Vice Chair Guyton, and members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on House Bill 58. My name is Sara Westrick, Advocacy Director for AARP Maryland. Representing nearly 850,000 members, AARP Maryland is one of the largest membership-based organizations in the state. We support HB 58, and thank Delegate Healey for introducing this important legislation.

AARP is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering people to live their best lives. We advocate on key issues affecting families, including health care, livable communities, retirement planning, and protection from financial abuse.

This bill updates Maryland’s transportation law to require counties to better coordinate and provide interjurisdictional paratransit services, meaning trips that cross county lines, especially to major health-care systems.

As we strive to create age-friendly communities, it is essential that we prioritize accessible, reliable transportation for older Marylanders and individuals with disabilities. HB 58 takes a significant step in this direction by requiring counties to identify interjurisdictional paratransit service routes in their funding applications and to ensure that these routes are established between counties and facilities within specific provider networks.

AARP Maryland believes that reliable paratransit across county lines is essential to helping older adults stay connected to the services and opportunities that allow them to thrive. AARP Maryland has collaborated with partners such as Mpact Mobility and the Maryland Department of Transportation on this issue. Together, we worked with elected officials, agencies, and community members to identify best practices for transportation systems that are safe, affordable, and coordinated, so riders are not limited by jurisdictional boundaries. This kind of seamless mobility ensures that older adults can affordably reach medical appointments, retail destinations, and community activities with dignity and confidence.

This bill promotes independence and mobility for older adults and people with disabilities, enabling them to access essential services, medical appointments, and social activities. Equally important, by creating access to medical services, food stores, and preventing social isolation, this bill will support better health outcomes for these vulnerable populations. This bill also recognizes the necessity of collaboration and coordination among counties, transportation providers, and health care networks. By requiring counties to cooperate in establishing

interjurisdictional paratransit service routes, we can foster a more integrated and efficient transportation system that better serves the needs of older Marylanders and individuals with disabilities.

In conclusion, we strongly support HB 58 and urge the committee to pass it, as it will create more age-friendly and inclusive paratransit systems across the state.

If you have any questions, please contact Sara Westrick at swestrick@aarp.org or by calling 410-310-0374.