

HB0733 Ben Dubin FAV

Uploaded by: Ben Dubin

Position: FAV

HB 733 Maryland Transit Administration - Fixed-Route Transit Services – Announcements

HB 733 requires real-time audible and text-based announcements that announce all stops and other critical information on all fixed-route transit services. While some MTA buses or MARC trains provide some audible and text-based announcements, the information is far from being consistent or not available at all. The Americans with Disabilities Act was passed almost 36 years ago and still individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing are discriminated against in the use MTA's fixed route transit services because of the lack of text-based announcements. Likewise, someone with a vision impairment needs an audible system to navigate successfully on MTA's system. Why is Maryland so far behind other states or many European countries in using the available technology to assist individuals with disabilities to navigate the Maryland Transportation system.

My daughter, who is profoundly deaf, has used the MARC train system for over 25 years and has struggled with knowing where or why the train was stopping. Whereas the hearing person was able to hear the announcements. This

discriminatory practice needs to be corrected so that all riders have equal access to Maryland's transportation services.

Benjamin J Dubin

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Baltimore, MD 21208

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MDAD Letter Written Testimony HB 733.pdf

Uploaded by: MDAD President MDAD President

Position: FAV



Maryland Association of the Deaf
Written Testimony
HB 733 – Maryland Transit Administration - Fixed-Route
Transit Services - Announcements
Thursday, February 19, 2026
Position: Favorable

President

Tina Joyner

The Maryland Association of the Deaf (MDAD) is a statewide organization that protects the interests of Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing Marylanders concerning accessibility and equity issues. Currently, there are approximately 1.2 million of these individuals living in the State of Maryland.

Vice President

Jacob Leffler

MDAD strongly supports HB 733, which would require the Maryland Transit Administration to provide real-time audible and text-based announcements on all fixed-route transit services. This legislation represents an important step toward ensuring equitable access and safety for Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing Marylanders across the state.

Secretary

Payal Sweet

Access to clear, reliable transit information is essential for independent travel.

Treasurer

Smita Kothari

Currently, many Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing riders face barriers navigating buses, light rail, MARC, and other fixed-route transit systems due to a lack of consistent visual and real-time information. HB 733 directly addresses these challenges by requiring that riders receive both audible and textual announcements, making public transportation more inclusive and accessible for everyone, regardless of hearing ability.

Board Members

Meredith DeSomma

Vikki Porter

Theo Conley

Kitty Fogarty

Bill Millios

Thelma Schroeder

By adopting HB 733, Maryland will demonstrate its commitment to equity in public transit and compliance with the principles of the Americans with Disabilities Act. This measure not only benefits Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing riders but also improves overall rider experience and safety for the broader community.

For these reasons, the Maryland Association of the Deaf urges a favorable report on HB 733.

Thank you,

MDAD Board of Directors

MGA 2026 Testimony Bill HB0733 (Fixed-Route Transi

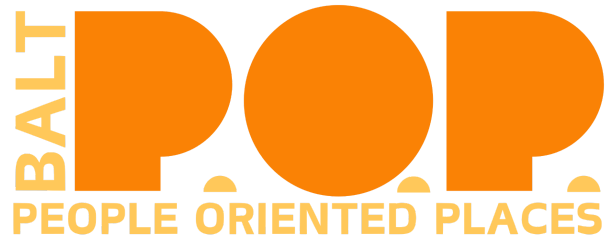
Uploaded by: Michael Scepaniak

Position: FAV

Bill: HB0733

Bill Title: Maryland Transit Administration -
Fixed-Route Transit Services - Announcements

Position: **Favorable**



Members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee,

As a group, BaltPOP firmly believes that the residents of Baltimore and its surrounding counties should be able to navigate freely around their communities, no matter what mode they choose. As such, we support HB0733.

In particular, public transportation is a key ingredient in a comprehensive transportation system, Buses are open to those with a variety of physical abilities, offering a far higher level of flexibility than is available with the most common alternatives: paratransit (which often requires laborious planning) and getting ferried around by relatives.

It is easy to underestimate the power of announcements, but they are one of the crucial elements of a truly accessible transit system. Riders need to be able to navigate the system easily, and they need to know where they are at any given moment. Text and audio announcements are the primary way to provide this information.

At a basic level, announcements can communicate what the next stop is, of course, but their role is much broader than that. When a bus stops, for example, it can play an audio announcement of the route number and destination, to make it possible for visually-impaired users to get on the correct bus without needing to depend on the assistance of the operator. Announcements also indicate when riders have the opportunity to transfer to other lines; if there is a service disruption or a modified route; as well as any other information pertinent to rider safety and comfort. A bus without announcements is like a highway without road signs: illegible and hostile to the user.

Unfortunately, announcements on MTA buses are inconsistent at best, and completely absent at worst. The problem exists on many types of buses — including both those with dot matrix displays and those with LCD screens — and across different bus lines. This situation forces riders to rely on personal knowledge and navigation apps to know where the bus is located, which is inconvenient for *all* riders.

The effects are particularly severe for occasional users and for those with visual impairments. There are workarounds. Individuals can ask the operator where the bus is going, or ask other riders where the bus is at a given moment. But, these alternatives don't satisfactorily make up for the MTA's failure to provide basic information.

Certain changes would make announcements most effective for users. Announcements should be pre-recorded (instead of being said by the operator), to avoid placing an unnecessary burden on the operator and to ensure clear messaging for riders. Announcements should also be provided in multiple languages — in Spanish at a minimum, and in other languages where applicable, based on the communities that a given route serves.

This bill does place an unfunded mandate on the MTA, so legislators will need to continue to communicate with the agency to ensure that the capacity exists to implement these changes. That said, there are potential fiscal benefits for the agency as well. If the core bus system becomes more accessible, this may lighten the load on paratransit, a crucial but expensive-to-provide alternative. If announcements are put in place on all MTA buses, the result will be a more welcoming, less stressful experience for *all* riders.

We hope the committee finds these points helpful and convincing and we urge its members to **vote in favor of HB0733**. Thank you to Delegate Guyton for sponsoring this bill, and we appreciate the opportunity to testify on this legislation.

[BaltPOP - Baltimoreans for People-Oriented Places](#)

Favorable - HB 733 - Del. Guyton.pdf

Uploaded by: Michele Guyton

Position: FAV

MICHELE GUYTON
Legislative District 42B
Baltimore County

—
Vice Chair
Environment and Transportation
Committee



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 19, 2026

Dear Chair Korman and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of HB 733. This bill requires MTA buses and MARC trains to provide real-time audible and text-based announcements for all stops and critical service information on fixed-route transit. By ensuring both clear audio announcements and reliable visual displays, this legislation will make Maryland's public transportation system more accessible to riders who are blind, low vision, deaf, or hard of hearing. It will also ensure that Maryland is in compliance with federal ADA requirements.

Under the ADA, fixed-route transit providers must ensure that passengers with disabilities have equivalent access to information about stops, routes, and service changes. This includes audible announcements of upcoming stops, transfer points, and rider-requested stops, along with visual displays that convey the same information in text form. Vehicles must be equipped so that announcements are clearly audible and visible from all passenger areas. These standards are designed to create a transit system that is predictable, reliable, and fully accessible to all riders, not just those without disabilities.

It is easy to overlook the importance of announcements and displays, but they are essential to a truly accessible transit system. Riders need to know where they are, what stop is next, and when service changes occur. Audio announcements communicate route numbers, destinations, transfer points, and disruptions. Visual displays provide the same critical information in text form, ensuring that riders who are deaf or hard of hearing are not left without updates. Together, they create a system that is clear, predictable, and usable for everyone.

Unfortunately, announcements and displays on these systems are inconsistent and sometimes absent, forcing riders to rely on guesswork or navigation apps, for those who have access to cellular devices. People with disabilities depend on affordable public transportation to work, attend medical appointments, shop for groceries, and stay connected to their families and communities. Real-time, accessible communication increases independence, safety, and confidence for all riders.

Sincerely,

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

Delegate Michele Guyton, District 42B

HB733.DD Coalition.Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Rachel London

Position: FAV



MARYLAND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COALITION

Dedicated to the rights and quality of life for people with developmental disabilities in Maryland

House Environment and Transportation Committee

February 19, 2026

HB 733: Maryland Transit Administration – Fixed Route Transit Services – Announcements Position: Support



The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Coalition (DD Coalition) is comprised of five statewide organizations that are committed to improving the opportunities and outcomes for Marylanders with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). As such, the DD Coalition supports HB 733.



Reliable and effective transportation is crucial for people with disabilities to participate in various aspects of daily life. The availability and accessibility of public transportation continues to serve as a significant barrier for people with disabilities to access and participate in employment, education, healthcare, and other community and social activities.

WHAT does this legislation do?

- Requires real-time audible and text-based announcements that announce all stops and other critical information on all fixed-route transit services.



WHY is this legislation important?

- People with disabilities rely on affordable, accessible public transportation to go grocery shopping, attend medical appointments, to socialize, and to spend time with family. Being able to move easily around our neighborhoods, cities, and towns is crucial to a high quality of life.
- Providing additional ways to get critical information about travel disruptions in real time increases Marylander's ability to use public transportation.



Maryland Developmental
Disabilities Council
CREATING CHANGE · IMPROVING LIVES

The DD Coalition supports HB 733 as a step to increase access for people with disabilities in Maryland.

Contact: Rachel London, Executive Director, Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council; Chair, DD Coalition: RLondon@md-council.org



Favorable HB0733 MTA announcements.pdf

Uploaded by: Ronza Othman

Position: FAV



Live the life you want.

From: Ronza Othman, President
National Federation of the Blind of Maryland
15 Charles Plaza, #3002
Baltimore, MD 21201 president@nfbmd.org

To: House Environment and Transportation Committee

The members of the National Federation of the Blind of Maryland urge the House of Delegates, Environment and Transportation Committee to give a favorable report to HB0733 - Maryland Transit Administration - Fixed-Route Transit Services – Announcements.

Our blind members have the right to move about their communities independently and with dignity. One of the best means for us to do so is via the bus system. Audio announcements on bus stops are necessary for our ability to travel. The bus announces the upcoming stop as we approach it so that we can disembark. In addition, as we wait at a bus stop, we know the bus has arrived and identify it as the particular bus we want because of the audio bus announcements. When we are riding the bus and the audio announcements don't work or are turned off, we must ask the driver to alert us of our stop, and they forget quite frequently, causing us to miss our stop, and then having to double back on foot in an area in which we are not familiar. We also should not have to draw attention to our blindness by asking the drivers to let us know when we get to the stop we need, which is not something sighted passengers have to do.

Many blind and low vision individuals are not technologically sophisticated, and thus using individual GPS devices or other means to know when the bus stop is coming is not possible. Moreover, sighted individuals just have to look outside the window to know where they are – the least that could be done for blind passengers is to have a working and effective audio bus stop announcement system.

Even now, though our buses are supposed to have stop announcements, our members report them being inconsistent, and often not present. One member reports not having heard a single stop announcement on her daily bus route for at least six months. Bus announcements are sometimes turned off by drivers, who find them annoying. But this is

literally part of their jobs. We need stop announcements to work reliably to enable our independence and allow us to retain our dignity as equal participants in society.

For those reasons, we ask for a favorable report on HB0733. For questions, please contact me at President@nfbmd.org or at 443-426-4110.

National Federation of the Blind of Maryland

Ronza Othman, *President NFBMD* | 15 Charles Plaza, #3002, Baltimore, MD 21201 | 443-426-4110 | www.nfbmd.org

HB 733 - Maryland Transit Administration - Fixed-R

Uploaded by: Sara Westrick

Position: FAV



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HB 733 Maryland Transit Administration - Fixed-Route Transit Services - Announcements
House Environment and Transportation Committee
February 19, 2026
FAVORABLE

Chair Korman and members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on House Bill 733. 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 733, and thank Vice Chair Guyton 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.

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 733 is a simple, practical, and deeply impactful bill that strengthens Maryland's commitment to accessible, age-friendly, and equitable public transportation. The bill requires the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) to provide real-time audible and text-based announcements of all stops and other critical information across all fixed-route transit services.

These announcements are essential for older adults who rely heavily on public transit to remain independent and connected to their communities. For many, age-related vision or hearing changes make real-time stop announcements essential for safe navigation. Clear audible and text-based cues remove barriers to using transit confidently.

Accessible announcements are also a universal public good that assist riders navigating an unfamiliar route, visitors and tourists, people carrying groceries, people managing strollers, distracted riders, and even riders in crowded situations where navigation cues are obstructed.

HB 733 aligns with best practices in age-friendly transportation planning. Age-friendly communities prioritize clarity and accessibility in public infrastructure. Statewide implementation of standardized audible and text-based announcements is a smart, low-cost way to advance Maryland's broader goals of enabling residents to age in place and maintain full community participation.



This bill reflects good policy; it is simple, actionable, and centered on the well-being and dignity of Marylanders across all ages and abilities. In conclusion, we strongly support HB 733 and urge the committee to issue a favorable report.

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

HB0733 - LOSWA - MTA - Maryland Transit Administra

Uploaded by: Patricia Westervelt

Position: FWA

February 19, 2026

The Honorable Marc Korman
Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee
250 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Letter of Support with Amendments – House Bill 733 – Maryland Transit Administration – Fixed-Route Transit Services – Announcements

Dear Chair Korman and Committee Members,

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully submits the following letter of support, with amendments, for House Bill 733.

HB 733 would require the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) to provide real-time audible and text-based announcements for all stops on all fixed-route transit services.

MTA appreciates the intent of HB 733 and efforts to support riders with hearing and vision challenges. While the vast majority of MTA's vehicles already come equipped with real-time audible and text-based announcements required under the bill, some of MTA's older buses and MARC trains lack the visual message boards needed for text-based announcements. Installing the necessary equipment on these older vehicles under the timeline would be costly and impractical.

Notwithstanding these challenges, MTA remains committed to providing an inclusive and accessible riding experience for all passengers by phasing out the use of vehicles that are not fully equipped with audible and text-based announcements. MTA proposes amending HB 733 to prohibit the agency from entering into any new procurement contracts after October 1, 2026, that do not have real-time audible and text-based announcement capabilities.

MTA is committed to engaging in discussions with the bill sponsor and other stakeholders on ways to improve the ridership experience for those with hearing and vision disabilities.

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests that the committee consider this information and amendment proposal during its deliberation on House Bill 733.

Respectfully submitted,

Jalen Sanders
Director of Government Affairs
Maryland Transit Administration
443-810-4461

Matthew Mickler
Director of Government Affairs
Maryland Department of Transportation
410-865-1090

GODHH LOI - HB733.docx (1).pdf

Uploaded by: Usherla DeBerry

Position: INFO

Wes Moore
Governor

Aruna Miller
Lt. Governor



Usherla DeBerry
Director

TO: Chair Korman, Vice Chair Guyton, and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee

FROM: Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

SUBJECT: Letter of Information on House Bill 0733 - Maryland Transit Administration - Fixed-Route Transit Services - Announcements

HEARING DATE: 2/19/26

Greetings Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

The Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH) respectfully submits this letter of information regarding House Bill 733, sponsored by Delegate Guyton.

HB 0733 would require the Maryland Transit Administration to provide real-time audible and text-based announcements for all stops and critical service information on fixed-route transit services. This legislation advances accessibility, safety, and equitable access to public transportation for Maryland residents.

Reliable, multimodal communication in transit systems is essential. Visual announcements ensure that Deaf and Hard of Hearing riders have meaningful access to stop information, route changes, and emergency updates. Audible announcements likewise support riders who are blind or have low vision. These systems improve safety, reduce confusion, and promote independence for all passengers.

At the same time, ODHH urges caution in passing legislation that significantly increases expenditures. Any legislation that increases spending should include specific, identified, and sustainable funding offsets. For that reason, ODHH supports amendments offered by the

Maryland Department of Transportation to help defray costs while still achieving the policy objective of improving accessibility and communication equity.

With the inclusion of fiscally responsible amendments, ODHH respectfully urges a favorable report on HB 0733.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to accessibility and responsible governance. Please feel free to contact our office if we may provide additional technical assistance.

Sincerely,

Director Usherla DeBerry

Director

Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing