



**SB0199 Maryland Transit Administration - Funding (Transit Safety and Investment Act)**

Presented to the Honorable Senator Guy Guzzone and Members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

January 20, 2021 1:00 p.m.

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**POSITION: SUPPORT**

NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland urges the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee to issue **a favorable report on SB0199 - Maryland Transit Administration - Funding (Transit Safety and Investment Act)**, sponsored by Senators Cory McCray and Craig Zucker.

Our organization is an advocate for reproductive health, rights, and justice. Safe, reliable, and accessible public transportation is an essential component of healthcare access and reproductive rights. MTA is not provided sufficient funding which has resulted in neglected maintenance and repairs, and has contributed to the frequent breakdown of buses, light rail vehicles, subway trains, and MARC commuter trains.

Access to reproductive healthcare services such as contraceptive care, sexually transmitted infection (STI) prevention and treatment, pregnancy-related healthcare, and obstetrical care is a human fundamental right. Equitable and dependable access to this care by patients through public transportation is a matter of reproductive justice. Low-income individuals and people of color rely most on public transportation to access these essential services<sup>1</sup>; transportation policies which provide inadequate funding for public transit services facilitate inequitable access to care and exacerbate reproductive health disparities. It is also important to note that healthcare workers rely on public transportation to jobs that provide this timely and essential healthcare.

Additionally, well-maintained and reliable vehicles are essential to encourage the overall use of public transit, which is a critical component to reducing the effects of climate change. There is mounting evidence of the adverse reproductive health outcomes associated with pollution and extreme weather conditions<sup>2</sup>, including pregnancy loss, infertility, and low birth weight among many other health consequences.

The Transit Safety & Investment Act will mandate that MTA's capital budget be at a level that allows it to repair its systems in order to operate safely and reliably. It will also make funding available to the locally operated transit systems throughout Maryland. We support this effort because it will reduce reproductive health disparities directly and indirectly by improving access to care and reducing the effects of climate change. For these reasons, NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland **urges a favorable committee report on SB0199**. Thank you for your time and consideration.

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<sup>1</sup> Sanchez, T., Stolz, R., & Ma, J. (2003). *Moving to Equity: Addressing Inequitable Effects of Transportation Policies on Minorities*. Cambridge, MA: The Civil Rights Project at Harvard University.

<sup>2</sup> Flavelle, C. (2020). *Climate Change Tied to Pregnancy Risks, Affecting Black Mothers Most*. The New York Times.