



**Maryland Developmental
Disabilities Council**

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House Appropriations Committee

SB 838: Transportation – Elderly and Handicapped Transportation Service – County Funding

April 4, 2022

Position: Support with Amendments

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council (DD Council) is an independent, public policy organization that creates changes to make it possible for people with developmental disabilities to live the lives they want with the support they need. The DD Council is led by people with developmental disabilities and their families. **As such, the DD Council supports SB 838 because it is a step towards increasing access to public transit for people with disabilities in Maryland. However, an amendment is needed to ensure the language used in the legislation accurately reflects what people with disabilities need and want.**

It is important that we use language that is person-first and shifts away from the use of outdated definitions for people with disabilities. The recommended amendments are to redefine “elderly and handicapped person” to more appropriately identify people with disabilities and rename the bill to reflect that change:

- On page 2, following line 7, insert “Individual with disabilities means any person, who has a qualified disability and is negatively and disproportionately impacted by inaccessible mass transit facilities and services.”
- On page 2, lines 4-7, remove the existing definition of “elderly and handicapped person” and redefine to encompass solely older adults.
- On page 3, lines 22-24, remove “handicapped transportation needs” and replace with “transportation needs of individuals with disabilities”
- Alter the bill title to reflect the changes: Transportation - Transportation Services for Older Adults and Individuals with Disabilities

People with disabilities rely on affordable, accessible public transportation to access resources, such as urgent health services, food and other groceries, employment, and social and educational opportunities. Equity in transportation is critical for people with disabilities and their ability to contribute economically, socially, and politically. Affordable transportation options for people with disabilities remain an ongoing challenge. More efforts must be made to ensure that people with disabilities have access to affordable and reliable transportation.

For these reasons, the DD Council supports SB 838 with the changes in language noted above.

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