



## **TESTIMONY FOR SB0023**

### **Equity in Transportation Sector - Guidelines and Analyses**

**Bill Sponsor:** Sen Jill Carter

**Committee:** Finance

**Organization(s) Submitting:** Policy Foundation of Maryland, Member of Maryland Legislative Coalition

**Person Submitting:** Sarahia Benn, Executive Dir. of Policy Foundation of Maryland, Member of Maryland Legislative Coalition

**Position:** FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0023 on behalf of the Policy Foundation of Maryland and as a Member of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Policy Foundation of Maryland is a grassroots organization focused on State and County level legislation and policies that impacts marginalized communities and veterans affairs. Transportation legislation is of massive importance to these communities particularly due to how impacted these communities have been historically and currently. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

At one point transit in Maryland and Washington DC were running at the same pace. Now Marylanders have been left behind impacting millions financially and impacting Maryland's future environmentally, as well as, economically.

June 2015 Governor Hogan canceled the Red Line. Why was the Red Line canceled? Before canceling this mostly federally funded project was a transit analysis done to see what impact it would have on the affected communities (lost jobs, wages, customers, access to higher paying jobs) vs the minute cost savings? Was there a transit analysis to determine whether this project's investment would help transform these affected communities' economy and other social issues in a positive manner? Furthermore, why were the cuts to the very bus service that was created in place of the Red Line made in 2020 in the middle of covid-19 pandemic where in the majority of people affected were low-income, marginalized, and front-line workers?

When the Maryland Department of Transportation, and the Governor, can make unilateral decisions that completely evade Title VI protections, and actually harm low-income and front-line workers without any repercussions at all, it's time to make significant changes and create a policy that holds these entities accountable. Maryland spends 80% of its transportation budget on roads, while leaving our public transit system in shambles in comparison to every competitive State near and afar. All policies in Maryland must lead with equity in mind otherwise we will continue to leave portions of Marylanders behind. Transit is one force that can level the playground to allow access to high paying jobs, food sources, and other needs just by providing access.

Passing this SB0023 will help bring equity into the transit planning process. It will require that equity is considered when making transportation plans and will preclude the Department of Transportation from self-policing Title VI changes. It establishes the Commission on Transportation Equity to assist in developing policies and performance measures to ensure the State transportation system is equitable. Finally, it requires the Department of Transportation to conduct transit equity analyses and consult with impacted communities before announcing or proposing service changes.

The Policy Foundation of Maryland supports this SB0023 and we recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in Committee.

Respectfully submitted,



Sarahia Benn  
(Policy Foundation of Maryland, Member of Maryland legislative Coalition)

[Sarhiabenn@gmail.com](mailto:Sarhiabenn@gmail.com)

**(Dedicated to Black History Month)**

“People always say that I didn’t give up my seat because I was tired, but that isn’t true. I was not tired physically ... No, the only tired I was, was tired of giving in.”

— **Rosa Parks.**