



**Committee: Finance**

**Testimony on: SB023 - Equity in Transportation Sector-Guidelines & Analyses**

**Organization: Women Indivisible Strong Effective**

**Submitting: Monica O'Connor, Legislative Liaison**

**Position: Favorable**

**Hearing Date: January 26, 2022**

Dear M. Chair and Committee Members:

Thank you for allowing our testimony today. WISE is an all-volunteer women-led group of advocates formed in Anne Arundel County, and has over 600 members. WISE urges you to vote favorably on SB023. This bill aims to rectify the immense inequality in transportation access for black and brown communities by requiring the State to make equity a primary goal in Maryland's Transportation Plan.

SB023 is necessary because unequal access to public transportation has historically not been enforced at the state level. The examples of race-based inequity are many - from the cancellation of the Red Line to the fact that the MTA service cuts in September 2020 placed the greatest burden on the routes servicing black communities. All the while emphasis has been placed on funding airports and state highways - transportation vehicles enjoyed primarily by white ridership.

SB023 helps to fix these inequities by requiring a proactive and anticipatory approach to equity in transit and intermodal transit planning and by broadening participation by transit dependent communities.

It is time for Maryland to take this vital step forward in the fight against race-based transit policies. We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.

