



## House Bill 58

### *Transportation - Paratransit Services - Interjurisdictional Routes*

MACo Position: **OPPOSE**

To: Environment & Transportation Committee

Date: February 5, 2026

From: Dominic J. Butchko

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **OPPOSES** HB 58. This bill would impose uniform, one-size-fits-all service requirements on county paratransit providers, including mandated service to specified healthcare networks that may be located well beyond distances that county transportation systems are designed—and funded—to cover.

Paratransit is intended to function as a “safety net” transportation option for individuals whose disabilities prevent them from using the regular fixed-route system (bus or rail). Consistent with that purpose, paratransit service is generally structured to mirror fixed-route service—operating during similar hours and days, and serving origins and destinations typically within three-fourths of a mile of a standard bus route. While operational details and capacity can vary by jurisdiction, the core role of paratransit is to provide a level of service that is roughly comparable to what a standard transit network makes available.

Counties appreciate the intent behind HB 58. However, absent additional State funding, the bill would likely significantly increase county paratransit costs. Although many jurisdictions—particularly within Maryland’s urban core—have providers associated with the six networks identified in the legislation, those networks do not serve all regions of the State. As a result, counties could be compelled to establish or expand service to destinations far from the originating county, creating long-distance trip obligations that extend beyond the traditional scope of paratransit as a complementary service aligned with fixed-route transit.

Counties also have concerns with the bill’s approach of embedding specific healthcare providers in statute. The healthcare landscape—even among nonprofit systems—can change quickly through mergers, acquisitions, service-line shifts, and evolving geographic coverage. Codifying particular entities may create implementation and compliance challenges over time as provider footprints, ownership, and services change.

Counties sympathize with the sponsor’s intent, but as drafted, this bill creates a substantial unfunded mandate and dramatically extends the intended scope of county paratransit services. Accordingly, MACo urges the Committee to issue an **UNFAVORABLE** report for **HB 58**.