

To Chairperson Stokes and Members of the Education, Workforce, and Youth (EWY) Committee:

My name is Cleopatra Martey. I live in the Reservoir Hill/Penn North neighborhood and I am a teacher at James McHenry Elementary/Middle School as well as I am a parent of two sons, ages 9 and 12 that attend Baltimore Montessori School.

I'm here today to share how public transportation has impacted education for my sons and the students I teach. I hope you'll hear our stories today and take quick action to address these problems.

I chose to testify today because public transportation affects my sons & I as well as many of my students at James McHenry.

Having to walk past a series of abandoned houses early in the morning when it's still dark outside and sometimes being met with the likes of a few unmentionable characters that are high and/or inebriated is truly unsettling.

Then to make matters worse, to reach the bus stop & have bus drivers at times pass the bus stop for no unforeseen reason is so frustrating & unacceptable.

My top concern is for the safety of my sons & my students who have to encounter this experience more often than not. Some of my students choose to not attend school for the simple fact that they feel scared to travel under these grave circumstances.

This situation must change now. It makes me wonder if my students or my children and myself lived in a more affluent neighborhood would we be experiencing these same issues?!

I ask for the MTA to ensure more buses are available during school and afterschool hours so my sons and my students wouldn't have to worry about the buses skipping their stop. I'm also asking for this committee to address safety on the bus routes. All bus stop areas should be well lit for safe waiting. Also, the city council should consider solutions that would prevent harassment by the unmentionable people who loiter at the bus stop areas.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify.