

Testimony on H.B. 166: Main Operating Budget for FY 2020 - 2021 House Finance Committee

May 7, 2019

WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY

Good morning Chairman Oelslager and members of the Finance Committee, first and foremost I would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide comments today. My name is Ramona Turnbull and I am a member of the End Poverty Now Coalition as well as NOBLE (Northern Ohioans for Budget Legislation Equality). Both organizations focus on various issues of poverty in Northeast Ohio.

First I would like to thank you and the other members of the House who have led the effort to substantially increase the amount that goes to public transportation over what was in the Senate transportation bill. However, now that it is being funded in the operating budget, I would like to speak to it here.

Even with the proposed \$70 million that was negotiated for this year's biennium budget the amount per capita, is not nearly enough. The proposed \$70 million is certainly above what the state had be allocating previously in the transportation budget but it is well below most of our nearby and comparable states. The \$70 million proposed will come out to about six dollars per capita in the state of Ohio. In comparison Indiana allocates over \$9 per capita, Wisconsin allocates \$20 per capita, Michigan expends \$27 per capita and Pennsylvania allocates \$128 per capita. As states not dissimilar to Ohio they recognize the importance to comprehensive and affordable public transportation.

I, as well as multitudes of others in Ohio county rely on public transportation to get to our jobs and school. At this point, if I didn't have a disability pass, I wouldn't be able to afford the transportation cost on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis. I have to work, but I have problems keeping up with transportation to and from work. At this point now, if I didn't have a disability pass, I wouldn't be able to afford the transportation cost on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis. I have to work, but I have problems accessing transportation to and from work. In Cleveland as our public transit system has faced financial difficulties routes have been reduced and the frequency of bus routes.

For example one day I went to get food at a new location. I waited for an hour for a bus on a main street to go home and continued to wait. I had a grocery bag and a cart full of groceries. As I continued to wait for the bus, a man passed by. He asked if I was waiting for a bus. I told him that I was, and he informed me that the busses no longer ran on Saturday on that street. It was one of the cutbacks to save money because of inadequate funding.

I will be 60 years old this year, and there is very limited access to bus passes for people in my situation. Most of the places that I go are too far to walk. I depend on public transportation. I ask that you consider expanding your finding for funding public transportation now and for the future. It is important to remember that Ohio is stronger when transportation is affordable and accessible. It is a boon to our economy; it is important to us as individuals.

Thank you for your time and consideration.