



**Representative Michele Lepore-Hagan
58th House District**

**Representative Dave Greenspan
16th House District**

Good morning Chairman Green, Ranking Member Sheehy and members of the Transportation and Public Safety Committee. We are pleased to have the opportunity to offer sponsor testimony in support of HCR 21, which designates February 14 as “Ohio Loves Transit Day.”

Representative Greenspan and I along with our 38 co-sponsors are offering HCR 21 because we believe it is important for the General Assembly to recognize the enormous contribution Ohio’s 61 public transit systems make to enhance the quality of life in our communities—including the districts you represent.

In some ways, that contribution can be gaged by statistics: our rural and urban transits provide more than 500,000 rides per day and more than 117,000,000 per year, including approximately 14,000,000 rides for seniors and people with disabilities. The systems employ more than 7,400 men and women and the \$1 billion spent on public transit in Ohio each year generates \$3.6 billion in spinoff activity that fuels our economy and creates private sector jobs.

While those numbers are impressive, public transit’s true value can best be measured by the positive ways in which it impacts so many lives. This morning thousands of our constituents are using public transit to reach destinations in Ohio’s small towns, bustling suburbs, and large cities.

Today in Fairfield County, a senior is riding Lancaster Public Transit to a doctor’s appointment or is it bingo? A veteran in Canton is taking a free ride to Cleveland’s Carl Stokes VA Medical Center on SARTA. In Oxford, students are studying as they ride Butler County RTA to class at Miami of Ohio. In Cleveland, commuters are pouring into downtown from the South, West, and East on the Rapid. Just outside the Statehouse, COTA is making it easy to get to and from work in the tech centers that make Ohio a major player in the global economy.

And that’s just a snapshot of who the state’s systems serve each and every day.

Last year, bi-partisan majorities in the House and Senate, along with Governor DeWine, acknowledged the importance of public transit by agreeing to significantly increase funding for the state’s 61 systems. That additional investment is already paying dividends. Systems across Ohio are using the new funding to embrace innovation and meet the ever-growing demand for mobility services.

Since 2016, the Ohio Public Transit Association and its member systems have used Ohio Loves Transit Day (OLTD) as an opportunity to educate the public, elected officials, community leaders, and the media about transit and encourage the use of public transportation. Over the past

three years, tens of thousands of people have joined in the fun including mayors, county commissioners, legislators, and other elected officials who have hopped onboard their local systems each February 14 as a way to demonstrate their support for public transit.

Adopting HCR 21 will make it clear that we too appreciate the many ways public transit makes Ohio a better place to live, work, and raise a family. We anticipate introducing an amendment to HCR 21 so that subsequently every February 14th will be included in this important recognition. We respectfully ask that you join us and our co-sponsors in sending a much-deserved Valentine to one of Ohio's most important industries.

Chairman Green, Ranking Member Sheehy, and members of the Committee, thank you again for giving us the opportunity to testify today. We will be happy to answer your questions.