

**WRITTEN PROPONENT TESTIMONY
OF KEVIN R. FLYNN, CINCINNATI CITY COUNCIL MEMBER
IN FAVOR OF HB 195**

Chairman LaRose, Vice Chair Kunze, Ranking Member Schiavoni, and Members of the Committee,

I appear before you today to urge your passage and support of House Bill 195, concerning Transport of Persons Using Wheelchairs, which received unanimous passage in the House of Representatives this past spring, with 66 cosponsors. Passage of this bill is a commonsense update to Ohio law, bringing Ohio into compliance with federal law and affording persons with mobility needs additional transportation options in order to more fully participate in working, living, and playing in the state of Ohio.

This legislation will allow Ohio to join many other states across the country in providing a variety of transportation options to persons having mobility impairments.

Accessibility for persons with mobility impairment is of importance not only to persons with such impairments, and their families, and their friends, but to all of Ohio. Current Ohio law is antiquated and prohibits the use of accessible taxicabs and transportation network vehicles to transport persons with mobility impairments in the state of Ohio, contrary to the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act, which has been the law of the land for over 27 years. House Bill 195 will update Ohio's laws and will enable cities across the State of Ohio to implement accessible taxi cab service, ensuring the transportation of persons with mobility impairments in an economical and efficient way;

Providing transportation options, including accessible taxi cabs and transportation network vehicles, will:

1. make Ohio and it's cities more competitive in attracting business and conventions from across the country;
2. allow persons with mobility impairments to more easily be employed by eliminating lack of transportation as a barrier to employment; and
3. save the State of Ohio, public and private insurance, and the taxpayers of Ohio money by eliminating unnecessary costs for the transportation of persons using mobility aids to doctor's and other medical appointments.

The basic principle of the Americans with Disabilities Act, which has been the law of the United States for over 27 years, is to eliminate discrimination against persons with disabilities in the United States. Transportation is incorporated in the Act to "assure equality of opportunity [for] independent living." The Act goes on to state that inequitable treatment as to transportation options "denies [persons] ... the opportunity to compete on an equal basis... and costs the United States billions of dollars in unnecessary expenses resulting from dependency and non productivity." I consider this a basic Civil Rights issue. Not only are the provisions of ORC 4766 a violation of Federal Law, but they are an extraordinary waste of the scarce tax dollars of the citizens of the State of Ohio.

I strongly urge the passage by the Senate Transportation, Commerce, and Workforce Committee of HB 195. Thank you.

Kevin Flynn