

To: Senate Transportation, Commerce, and Workforce Committee
Date: February 27, 2018
Re: HB 195
From: Katherine Hunt Thomas, Chair of the CIL Legislative Committee

I am writing on behalf of the Centers for Independent Living in Ohio regarding House Bill 195. A recent Developmental Disabilities Council Report, *Transportation Challenges for Ohioans with Disabilities*, cited the, “regulations requiring separate transportation for non-emergency medical and non-medical rides needlessly increased costs and decreased the ability of transportation providers to provide and expand their services,” as one of the many challenges facing persons with disabilities in finding reliable transportation. The law in Ohio, as it currently stands, requires anyone who wants to transport a person with a mobility impairment to become a licensed ambulette. It creates unnecessary barriers to businesses wishing to transport persons who use wheelchairs and, in effect, makes it difficult for people who use wheelchairs to get transportation. House Bill 195 takes steps to remove those barriers.

The Americans with Disabilities Act, passed in 1990, contains a specific section on the accessibility of public transportation because the issue is so important to community integration for persons with disabilities. For many, difficulty getting access to public transportation translates into difficulty working and socializing in the community. Under our current Ohio law, people with mobility impairments must take an ambulette licensed by the state Board of Emergency, Medical, Fire, and Transportation Services to get to work, the grocery store, the bank, a friend’s house, or any other trip that they wish to make. Amending that law via H.B. 195 will allow taxis, Uber, and Lyft to develop accessible cabs and will make those trips, and community access, more available to people with mobility impairments.

Across the country, states are taking steps to pass legislation that will allow them to offer a wide variety of transportation options to people with mobility impairments. House Bill 195 will bring Ohio into the fold. Its passage will take a step to increase the variety and availability of cost-effective transportation for people with mobility impairments. This, in turn, will increase people with mobility impairments’ access to work, business, medical care, and social activities.