



February 17, 2021

Good Morning Ladies and Gentlemen,

My name is Mary Habig, I am the Transit Director for Seneca and Crawford Counties. As you know, both these counties are considered Rural Ohio.

Many people think of Public Transit as the big gillig buses that stop here at the State House, the big buses in the Urban Cities. But, Public Transit is also, mini vans going down the gravel roads in Rural Ohio, (Seneca, Crawford, Monroe, Noble, to name a few) taking your people to life's basic needs: Medical, Education, Employment, Grocery Shopping and yes, Hair Dressers.

Many of your people who live in Rural Ohio, depend on Public Transit to get them to specialty care in Columbus, Cleveland, Toledo, etc. as specialty care isn't available in the smaller hospitals. They travel 2 hours to see these specialists.

During this past year, it's been extremely difficult for everyone; esp. those going to medical appointments. Before COVID-19, they were permitted to have a family member or a friend go with them. This past year, they've had to face these appointments alone. The Transit Driver is the person taking them, assuring them, "you're gonna be ok". We all appreciate the many police officers, doctors and nurses who have worked and continue to work throughout this pandemic. I understand their importance as my son is a Police Officer and both my daughters are Registered Nurses; again I understand and am not taking from their important roles. But the forgotten heroes are the Public Transit Drivers. They are "The" Front Line, as they are the ones who are taking your people to the doctors. Again, they are the ones who have stepped into the family role by being there for your people. The Transit employees worked and continue to work throughout this pandemic.

The Elderly and those with Disabilities depend on Public Transit. Many folks with disabilities are able to obtain employment, because they have access to Public Transit.

It was once said, "All men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness".

In closing, I ask you to think about these questions:

\*If Public Transit funds are cut, where will this leave Rural Ohio?

\* How many lives will be lost?

\*How many people are going to lose their employment?

\*What's going to happen to the many young adults and children, that depend on Public Transit to get them to school, college, training, esp. those with disabilities?

\*How are the low income people going to get to the food banks?

\* And, yes, let's not forget how many elderly ladies are going to have bad hair days?

Thank you for your time and your consideration.