



**Before the House Economic and Workforce Development Committee  
House Bill 488 – Adopt the Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Compact  
Sponsor Testimony by  
Representatives Michael J. Skindell and Haraz N. Ghanbari  
June 25, 2024**

Chairman Swearingen, Vice-Chair Santucci, Ranking Member Upchurch, and members of the Economic and Workforce Development Committee, thank you for the opportunity this morning to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 488. I am honored to be joined in this legislation by my joint sponsor Representative Ghanbari. This legislation has Ohio rejoining the Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission “MIPRC,” which Ohio was a member between 2003 and 2013. House Bill 488 allows Ohio a seat at the table during a time when Amtrak and the Federal Government has made a commitment to expand passenger rail service in the Midwest, including in Ohio.

According to its webpage, MIPRC is “an interstate compact commission of Midwestern state legislators, governors, and their designees [which] promotes the growth and development of state and regional passenger rail to create and maintain a modern, clean, efficient transportation network.” The goals of the compact are to promote development and implementation of improvements to intercity passenger rail services in the Midwest; coordinate interaction among Midwestern state officials; to promote the development of long-range plans for high-speed rail passenger services, and to work with public and private sectors at the federal, state, and local levels to ensure coordination.

Current members of the commission include Indiana, Illinois, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, North Dakota, and Wisconsin. It would be to Ohio’s advantage to rejoin MIPRC at this time. With all the exciting developments regarding passenger rail, 2024 is far different from the time Ohio withdrew from the commission in 2013. In December 2023, the Federal Government announced corridor identification studies of four Amtrak routes crossing through Ohio. These potential routes include a 3C+D connector Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, and Cincinnati to a Midwest connector running through central Ohio from Pittsburgh to Chicago.

The modernization and expansion of passenger rail in Ohio will have a significant economic impact for our state. Amtrak’s economic analysis states that the 3C+D connection would have a \$130 million economic impact annually and economic activity from one-time capital investments of \$2.6 billion. Another study conducted by Scioto Analysis examining the same connector released in October 2023 would contribute \$106 to \$107 million to gross state product and will contribute between \$25 and \$47 million to gross state product per year in economic impact from ridership. Investment in this corridor would create 1,100 to 1,200 jobs and revenue from the operation of the nine stations due to ridership will support 170 to 320 jobs annually. Further economic impact would occur in the future due to additional investments over the years.

Chairman Swearingen, Vice-Chair Santucci, Ranking Member Upchurch, and members of the Economic and Workforce Development Committee, thank you for the opportunity this morning to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 488. I would be happy to answer any questions.