

HB 96 WITNESS INFORMATION FORM

Please complete the Witness Information Form before testifying:

Date: 05/12/2025

Name: Deborah Azode, Student At Meadowdale Career Technology Center

Are you representing: Yourself **Organization**

Organization (If Applicable): Dayton Public Schools

Position/Title: Student

Address: 3873 Whitestone Court

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Do you wish to be added to the committee notice email distribution list? **Yes**

Business before the committee

Legislation (Bill/Resolution Number): House Bill 96

Specific Issue: Education Transportation Funding

Are you testifying as a: **Interested Party**

Will you have a written statement, visual aids, or other material to distribute? **Yes**

(If yes, please send an electronic version of the documents, if possible, to the Chair's office prior to committee. You may also submit hard copies to the Chair's staff prior to committee.)

How much time will your testimony require? **1-2 minutes**

Please provide a brief statement on your position: **The following testimony advocates for more funding for buses to public schools.**

Deborah Azode Testimony on Buses

I respectfully ask the representative to address the issues with the public school transportation here in the city of Dayton. Because our district doesn't have enough money for our own buses, Students have to ride Dayton's public buses, the Regional Transit Authority (RTA), in very unsafe and very packed environments, leading to students being late.

Students are getting harassed by adults when riding the RTA. Key findings include that sexual harassment during transit trips is a common experience (63% of respondents reported having been harassed). The experience of sexual harassment leads students to limit their use of transit, many take safety precautions when using transit. Consider also that very few people report their experiences of harassment. (<https://rosap.nhtl.bts.gov/>, [Metro Magazine](#))

Many students have come out with their experiences while riding the RTA bus to school, and many things that they have said mainly state that it's really not safe. Many students need to ride the bus for hours to get to school and take multiple transfers, a complaint that can be heard from Dayton to New York and beyond ([Alyssa Quart](#)).

RTA buses may come late to the school, making other students come late to school. Even though I have been on a RTA bus a few times in my life, it's not really safe for students to ride to school on. Public schools need more funding to

afford their own buses. Transportation around the world can cause some risk, such as getting harassed.

This problem is happening because the Ohio General Assembly agreed to make Dayton Public Schools provide busing for other schools, and leave other DPS students to find ways to get to school. DPS needs more funding to afford more school buses. My classmates and I have been talking to people in power about this issue, and were urging them to at least take action about it.

Some of the people in power that we have talked to either don't care about this issue, or don't think they can do anything about it. We, as citizens alone, can't fix the problem of lack of busing in DPS. However, we can advocate for busing for public schools. You as a lawmaker have the power to add money to the state budget that helps us afford our own buses.

We need busing for our students, and should not be going to school on the public buses, which are not 100% safe because of the adults riding alongside us. If we do nothing, attendance will go down, more students will get harassed on the RTA buses. If we give students their buses back, students will be able to go to school safely and on time. My question to the lawmakers is this: Are you willing to help propose a budget item to let public schools get their own busing? Would you be willing to change the law requiring public districts to bus private schools?