

**Substitute HB 96 Written Interested Party Testimony
Senate Finance Committee
Montgomery County Educational Service Center
June 6, 2025**

Chairman Cirino, Vice Chair Chavez, Minority Leader Hicks-Hudson and members of the Senate Finance Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on Substitute HB 96. My name is Shannon Cox, and I am the Montgomery County Educational Service Center, (MCESC) superintendent. We serve the needs of school districts and private schools (and their respective students) in and around the Montgomery County area.

I am writing today to thank you for extending the MCESC pupil transportation pilot program for another year. Through what we call our RideSmart Ohio initiative, we are working to address student transportation challenges through innovative solutions. RideSmart Ohio has promise for cost-effective and efficient alternatives for school districts struggling with driver shortages, rising costs, and compliance issues.

By extending the program another full year, we will be able to expand our reach and offer unique transportation alternatives for the region. This additional experience through RideSmart will provide feedback and a blueprint that could be useful in expanding the impact on a wider scale. We appreciate the opportunity to add to our success from this the first school year of implementation.

In addition to the one-year extension of the pilot, we were pleased to see that the Senate also saw fit to provide some added flexibility for us. In addition to transporting students to school, the substitute bill allows us to transport students to and from the workplace where they can gain valuable workplace learning experience. The businesses in our area regularly share frustrations over their difficulty in providing these important opportunities due to students' lack of transportation. We hope we can help with that to some extent with the new flexibility allowed in the bill.

Again, thank you for your support. We look forward to providing quality transportation services for students through this program. Please feel free to contact me with questions.

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