

## **Sub Bill Testimony – Workforce Mobility Partnership Program**

**To the Chair of the Transportation Committee,**

Chairman Patton, Vice Chair Schaffer, Ranking Member Antonio and members of the Senate Transportation Committee,

My name is Andy Volenik and I am the Executive Director for Delaware County Transit, the mobility options provider for the fastest growing county in Ohio.

I will be direct with my testimony – I am here to advocate for the reinstatement of 15 million per year for the Ohio Workforce Mobility Partnership Program within the substitution bill as it was presented by the House. DCT has benefited directly from this funding source with a pending workforce transportation plan which was funded by this program.

By allowing federal flex dollars to fund the OWMPP, agencies like DCT can take their transportation plans and then put it into action, providing effective and efficiently focused workforce transportation.

As you are all too aware, front-line positions have always been a challenge to fill, but ever since 2020, restaurants, retail centers, distribution and our ever-impressive modern-day manufacturing centers struggle to not only recruit but retain talent. In my discussions with Delaware's economic and workforce development personnel, one of the largest barriers is transportation and accessibility to these necessary and valuable jobs.

General public transportation can help with this – over 25% of DCT's ridership within the City of Delaware is for work. We see people from all lines of work use our core service – daycare teachers to middle school teachers, mechanics, hotel workers, and retail associates, the list goes on and on; however, this is a concentration of service.

The harder challenge is how do we get people from the rural portions of a county like Delaware to front-line positions, and how do we serve tertiary workers wanting to get into urban centers like Columbus? How can we foster innovative partnerships with COTA or Licking County Transit and ensure we serve major economic centers with service that works for the worker?

The continued funding of the OWMPP will empower Ohioans industry leading transit providers to solve this riddle and deliver a focused and effective service for workers.

We strongly seek your support for this change to the substitution bill and I thank you for your service to Ohio and for the time to provide my proponent testimony.

With the Utmost Respect,

Andy Volenik