



Greater Cleveland  
Regional Transit Authority

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**Testimony of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority  
Ohio Senate Transportation Committee  
In Support of House Bill 54  
March 14, 2025 | 10:00 AM**

Chairman Patton, Vice Chair Schaeffer, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the Senate Transportation Committee, good morning. My name is India L. Birdsong Terry, and I serve as the General Manager & Chief Executive Officer for the Greater Regional Transit Authority (GCRTA), Ohio's largest public transit agency, and I am testifying on behalf of GCRTA.

I want to express our appreciation for the provisions retained in House Bill 54 that improve transit operations and efficiency:

- Increasing the contract approval threshold from \$100,000 to \$250,000, allowing for more competitive bidding, faster project delivery, and improved operational efficiency.
- Removing the requirement that large regional transit authorities without a dedicated transit police force must contract with local law enforcement. This acknowledges the effectiveness of existing transit safety strategies, such as GCRTA's Transit Police and Transit Ambassadors, which ensure a secure and welcoming environment for riders.

These changes will help transit agencies operate more efficiently and continue providing safe, reliable service to Ohioans.

However, we are concerned about the removal of Ohio Workforce Mobility Partnership (OWMP) funding in the substitute version of House Bill 54. Established in House Bill 23, OWMP provides \$15 million annually to develop innovative workforce transportation solutions, connecting Ohioans to jobs and training centers.

With OWMP funding, GCRTA has been able to implement key workforce mobility projects, including:

- Expanding ConnectWorks to improve first-mile/last-mile access to job centers.
- Conducting a Microtransit Pilot Study to explore flexible service models that fill transportation gaps.
- Improving bus shelters and transit stops to enhance the rider experience and accessibility.
- Enhancing transit waiting environments to provide safer, more comfortable spaces for commuters.



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Removing OWMP funding eliminates the ability to launch new workforce transportation pilots or expand services to meet the needs of businesses and workers. This program was designed to provide all transit agencies—urban and rural—the flexibility to address regional workforce challenges. Without these funds, Ohio risks limiting workforce development efforts, reducing job access, and slowing economic growth.

Public transit is a key economic driver in Ohio. It enables workers to reach jobs, students to access education, and seniors and individuals with disabilities to maintain independence. Without sustained investment in workforce mobility solutions, Ohio risks:

- Failing to meet the transportation needs of businesses struggling to fill vacancies.
- Losing out on federal matching dollars, which require state commitments to unlock additional funding.
- Falling behind in economic competitiveness as other states invest in workforce mobility solutions.

To ensure Ohio remains competitive, we strongly urge the Senate to restore OWMP funding in House Bill 54, either through GRF allocations or by utilizing flex dollars to sustain this critical workforce transportation program.

Investing in transit means investing in Ohio's workforce, businesses, and economic future. We urge the Senate to act to ensure these critical funds are reinstated, allowing transit agencies to continue developing innovative transportation solutions that support Ohio's economy.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please feel free to reach out to me via phone (216) 356-3100 or via email [india.birdsong-terry@gcrta.org](mailto:india.birdsong-terry@gcrta.org) to answer any questions.