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**May 17, 2017 Testimony in front of the Ohio Senate Finance  
Committee,  
Mary Lynn Solomon, Public Transportation testimony**

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION is not just something people want, IT IS A NEED. It is a need not just for "poor" people who can't afford to buy a car. It's a need for people who just DON'T WANT A CAR or who just DON'T WANT TO DRIVE. AND it's also a NEED FOR OUR COMMUNITIES, OUR EDUCATION, OUR ENVIRONMENT, OUR PHYSICAL HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH AND I'm sure even MORE things that haven't come to mind as of yet.

WHAT DOES PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION DO FOR OUR COMMUNITIES? IT BRINGS PEOPLE TOGETHER! Instead of people being encased in their separate cars, they are waiting at bus stops TOGETHER, they are sitting in the buses and trains TOGETHER. Public transportation gives people the opportunity to be COURTEOUS to one another. You see people offering their seats to an older person or a person less steady than they are. You see people exchange seats so a parent or grandparent and child can sit together or so a sleepy child can lay down on their caretaker's lap. You see people offer change to another who is short on change or didn't have change. You see people share information like, what to do, when to get off, what bus to take, to someone new to public transportation. At times you see people smile at a stranger, strike up a conversation with a stranger, you see people use manners interacting with each other to get on and off the bus: excuse me, pardon me . . . you see people help another person get their stroller or grocery cart off the bus. Why? Maybe since WE'RE ALL IN THIS TRANSPORTATION VEHICLE TOGETHER, the thought is LET'S GO AHEAD AND ACT LIKE WE'RE TOGETHER.

WHAT DOES PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION DO FOR OUR EDUCATION? As I said before it reminds us to use our MANNERS, to be COURTEOUS, to HELP each other. It teaches our children and reminds us, adults of many great skills: It teaches our children and reminds us that EVERYTHING IS NOT INSTANTANEOUS. We have to wait for the bus, we sit reasonably still and talk quietly on the bus: My three year old granddaughter knows that on the bus you use an indoor voice. She knows you say "excuse me" if you accidentally touch someone else. She has great patience for sitting still that I know she learned from the hours we have taken the bus together which will really come in handy at school. It builds ENDURANCE and INDEPENDENCE for a child to walk to the bus stop and to the destination: my granddaughter could walk to and from the bus stop since the age of two just like I taught all of my children. It gets us outside to ENJOY THE OUTDOORS on a beautiful day and it gets us outside in the rain whether we like it or not . . . and my granddaughter reminds me that the rain is great too - because she's still young enough to completely enjoy the rain. It gets us to SHARE our seats, SHARE our change for bus fare, LEND AN EAR to LISTEN to a fellow passenger, LEND A HAND to help a fellow passenger, SHARE a tissue and COMPASSION to a fellow passenger who's having a very trying day, SHARE A SMILE and A LAUGH OR TWO. IT GETS US TO INTERACT AND SOCIALIZE!

WHAT DOES PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION DO FOR OUR ENVIRONMENT? First off there is LESS POLLUTION. Imagine if all the 20 to 50 people on a bus all were in separate cars times all the buses throughout the city of Cleveland, surrounding suburbs, other cities, etc. . . that would be a lot more cars, more pollution, more traffic requiring, in some instances, wider roads. Wider streets would take away even more of the little green we have left in urban areas. I would even go so far as to say that with proper and creative use of public transportation, well-serviced urban areas could actually ADD GREEN.

WHAT DOES PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION DO FOR OUR PHYSICAL HEALTH? It gets us riders out WALKING, sometimes even running. I have lost WEIGHT since I've been riding the bus regularly. It is a lot LESS POLLUTION for both transit riders and personal car riders.

WHAT DOES PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION DO FOR OUR MENTAL HEALTH? Driving a car can be stressful: you have to pay attention to everything around you, or, at least, you should be. You may be a decent driver but that doesn't necessarily mean the person in front, beside or in back of you is. And if some of us weren't riding the bus or train their would be even more traffic to deal with. A properly-funded, affordable, well-run public transportation system could help make private transportation even LESS STRESSFUL by making it attractive for people to leave their cars at home. More people riding public transportation would mean MORE INTERACTION AND SOCIALIZATION among our communities in a time when people are becoming more and more isolated and feeling the mental side effects of isolation.

In general people have the whole idea of transportation turned around. They think everyone should have a car and transport themselves basically individually to their destination when that is really extremely inefficient. People also have the tendency to think that driving is a right rather than a privilege as it is stated by the Bureau of Motor Vehicles. It is a privilege that you have to take a practice and take a test for, and if it is not performed in a responsible manner, can be taken away through a license suspension.

Aside from all the reasons I listed above, the fact of the matter is that our cities have been designed so that we have to have transportation because everything is so sprawled out. We, as individuals, didn't design the cities to be so sprawled out, so part of having a city function properly means transportation must be provided. So let's put public transportation in it's proper perspective which is: PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION IS NOT ONLY A NEED, BUT A RIGHT FOR ALL PEOPLE TO BE ABLE TO GET TO WHERE THEY NEED TO GO.

I THANK YOU IN ADVANCE FOR PUTTING PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION IN PROPER PERSPECTIVE WHEN YOU DECIDE ON FUNDING AS THIS CAN ONLY MEAN THAT THE BUDGET FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION WILL INCREASE SIGNFICANTLY.