

## OHIO SENATE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

### Interested Party Testimony on HB 74

**March 10, 2021**

**Chairwoman Kunze, Vice Chair Reineke, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the committee, thank you for holding this hearing and for the opportunity to provide testimony.**

My name is Carrie Woody and I am the Director for Lancaster-Fairfield Public Transit in Fairfield County. I thank you for allowing me the opportunity to come and testify one more time regarding HB74 and funding for public transit in Ohio.

As I mentioned in my last testimony, we operate a rural demand response transportation. In my previous testimony, I provided you a snapshot of how many people we are currently helping in our local community. Today I would like to focus on public transit as a “whole” as it relates to the budget as a “whole”.

In reviewing the Governor’s overall budget, I noticed several programs that have proposed increases. Let me be clear that I am not disputing the need for these increases, but I am hoping you realize how important our funding is to support the proposed increases in these programs. For example:

1. **Department of Aging, Department of Developmental Disabilities, Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities Agency** - In my prior testimony I mentioned that over 44% of our ridership is elderly and/or disabled. This number is low compared to what other systems are providing in their own communities.
2. **Department of Education & Department of Higher Education**: Transit systems throughout the state provide access for students, staff, and faculty to their local private and public schools starting with pre-k through post-secondary options. In Fairfield County, we have three post-secondary locations that we provide daily transportation to and from. In fact, until he retired, we took a professor that was blind to work every day to our local Ohio University branch!

3. **Department of Job and Family Services and Department of Medicaid** – We are the largest transportation provider for JFS programs. We provide access to benefits for clients to get to medical appointments, prescriptions, food, school, mandated reporting, employment opportunities, and more.
4. **Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services** – Many individuals receiving mental health and addiction services are not able to drive. We are their primary resource to counseling, mandated testing, mandated reporting, medical appointments, prescriptions, food, and work.
5. **Department of Rehabilitation and Correction and Department of Youth Services**– Upon release, throughout parole, through re-entry programs, court ordered or community-based programs, we are again connecting the individuals in these programs to the services they need to become contributing members of society.
6. **Veterans' Organizations and Department of Veterans Services** – Numerous veterans are using our services to get to medical appointments and treatment. In addition, we are helping our homeless veterans obtain employment and stable housing.
7. **Department of Health** – we are taking people for vaccinations, taking pregnant mothers for well checks, babies for medical appointments, and providing access to the numerous other programs the health department.
8. **Workforce Development / Economic Development** - - We are connecting employees to employers. As we struggle to get low income communities back to work, public transit is providing meaningful access to get these individuals and families back to work! From entry level positions to business professionals, we are getting them and keeping them in gainful employment.

I could continue with several more examples, but due to a time constraint, I'm hoping that I've demonstrated the vital role we play throughout the state and the other state funded programs. Again, I am not disputing the need for additional funding to any other programs, I just want you to keep in mind that cutting public transit funding means cutting the access to the increased services these programs are receiving. I urge you to keep public transit at \$70 million so that we can continue to support the people benefiting from these programs and more.

Madame Chairwoman, I thank you and the Finance Committee for listening and am open to any questions. Thank you.