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## **PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION FUNDING**

**WHEREAS:** Public transportation serves as a lifeline for thousands of Ohio residents who rely on the bus to get to work, school, church, the grocery store, the doctor, and other destinations; and

**WHEREAS:** In Cleveland, less than 30% of all jobs are reachable via transit in 90 minutes; and

**WHEREAS:** In Cincinnati, less than half of working-age residents are near a transit stop; and

**WHEREAS:** Many working people in our rural areas have no access to transit at all; and

**WHEREAS:** A recent transit needs study by the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) found that transit funding from all stakeholders needs to double to meet unmet and increasing demand; and

**WHEREAS:** Ohio is currently at 1980 levels for state transit funding (\$7.3 million statewide); and

**WHEREAS:** Ohio is ranked 38<sup>th</sup> in terms of overall dollars spent on public transit as well as the amount spent per capita (63 cents); and

**WHEREAS:** States that have virtually no transit even rank higher than Ohio, including South Dakota, Arkansas, West Virginia, and Kansas; and

**WHEREAS:** Even South Dakota, which has three times more cattle than people, invests more per person in transit than Ohio; and

**WHEREAS:** Ohio has 60 transit systems (14 urban, 10 small urban, and 36 rural), and all must share a piece of the \$7 million; and

**WHEREAS:** Since 2009, Ohio transit funding has dropped by more than 50%; and

**WHEREAS:** Unlike other states, Ohio transit has no dedicated source of funding (like gas taxes, lottery funds, vehicle registration fees, etc.), so Ohio relies solely on General Funds for transit, subject to the ups and downs of the budget process; and

**WHEREAS:** Since there is simply not enough state funding to spread around to all agencies in the state, over the last five years, legislators who serve mainly rural areas have directed ODOT to take all \$7.3 million of its state funding and give it to the smaller systems in the state; and

**WHEREAS:** The state's "Large Urban" transit systems, including RTA in Cleveland, SORTA in Cincinnati, COTA in Columbus and TARTA in Toledo receive only "flexible" federal highway dollars to keep them afloat in lieu of state funding; and

**WHEREAS:** As far as state funding for transit operations is concerned, Ohio simply has none; and

**WHEREAS:** This cripples the larger systems, as federal rules severely restrict the amount of funds that can be used to keep service on the street; and

**WHEREAS:** Federal money is mostly for capital projects only, leaving it up to the states and local governments to come up with the money to pay for day-to-day expenses; and

**WHEREAS:** For years, Ohio has simply ignored this, and as a result, Ohio transit systems have had to continually raise fares and cut back services on people who cannot afford to dig deeper into their wallets to get to work.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:** That the Ohio AFL-CIO calls on the Ohio Legislature to massively increase state funding for transit so that all of our citizens, no matter where they live, can get access to safe, convenient, and affordable public transportation.

**Submitted by: Amalgamated Transit Union Ohio Joint Conference Board**