



**CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS  
WITH DISABILITIES**

September 6, 2017

The Honorable Paul Ryan  
1233 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
233 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Re: CCD Transportation Task Force letter in reference to THUD FY 2018 budget

Dear Representatives Paul Ryan and Nancy Pelosi,

The Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) Transportation Task Force writes to urge you to assure that any final transportation authorization legislation provides funding for transportation programs that serve people with disabilities. The Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) is the largest coalition of national organizations working together to advocate for Federal public policy that ensures the self-determination, independence, empowerment, integration and inclusion of children and adults with disabilities in all aspects of society.

The Task Force supports funding for all transit programs. It is critical that transit programs have a sustainable, reliable and robust source of funding to assure their viability. People with disabilities disproportionately rely on public transit.<sup>1</sup> Public transit and paratransit are essential modes for people with disabilities to shop, work, participate and live in their communities.<sup>2</sup> If transit services are cut back, people with disabilities may be forced to use more expensive specialized transportation services to access work, education and social opportunities in their communities, or may find themselves confined to their homes.<sup>3</sup>

A number of federal formula grant programs support mobility for people with disabilities. Specifically, the Section 5310 Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities formula grant program.<sup>4</sup> Others that provide additional services for, and promote independence for, people with disabilities by funding programs as diverse as travel

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau (2011, September). Means of Transportation by Selected Characteristics, Supplemental Table to Commuting in the United States: 2009, American Community Survey Reports. Retrieved March 29, 2015 from [http://www.census.gov/hhes/commuting/files/2009/means\\_of\\_transportation.pdf](http://www.census.gov/hhes/commuting/files/2009/means_of_transportation.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> US Department of Transportation (USDOT), Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) (2003). Freedom to Travel. Retrieved March 29, 2015 from [http://www.rita.dot.gov/bts/sites/rita.dot.gov.bts/files/publications/freedom\\_to\\_travel/html/figure\\_03.html](http://www.rita.dot.gov/bts/sites/rita.dot.gov.bts/files/publications/freedom_to_travel/html/figure_03.html)

<sup>3</sup> People with disabilities have a greater difficulty getting the transportation they need. The problem most frequently cited is no or limited public transportation. See USDOT, BTS (2003), Freedom to Travel. p.5. Retrieved March 29, 2015 from [http://www.rita.dot.gov/bts/sites/rita.dot.gov.bts/files/publications/freedom\\_to\\_travel/pdf/entire.pdf](http://www.rita.dot.gov/bts/sites/rita.dot.gov.bts/files/publications/freedom_to_travel/pdf/entire.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> More than half a million people with disabilities never leave their home because of transportation difficulties. See USDOT, BTS (2003). p.1.

training, accessible taxicabs, door-through-door paratransit services, and other programs to help people with disabilities get to where they need to go.

Accessible public rights-of-way (PROW), including well-maintained sidewalks with curb ramps, and pedestrian signals at crosswalks, are vital for people with disabilities and benefit everyone. Accessible PROW allow people with disabilities to travel, including the last and first mile home or to work from a transit stop, as well as from worship, shopping or other errands.

Section 5310, TAP and other programs provide necessary avenues for people with disabilities to access employment. The unemployment rate for people with disabilities is currently around 11%, nearly twice the unemployment rate for the general population. This number is even higher for people of color and other disenfranchised communities who also have disabilities. Native American's with disabilities numbers are triple this estimate. Enhanced transportation and pedestrian accessibility allows more people to get to their jobs.<sup>5</sup>

Many local transit systems are struggling to meet the needs of citizens with disabilities through their paratransit programs. Further incentive is needed to create new and innovative ways to become more accessible and address existing deficiencies in service for individuals with disabilities. The competitive grant programs, strong outcome and accountability measures proposed in the Transit Accessibility Innovation Act would help achieve that goal. We hope that the final reauthorization bill will incorporate this important new idea.

We do not want to see defunding of the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) competitive grant program. To do this will eliminate funding that supports local communities as they build new transit systems. These transit systems will be used by millions of people with disabilities and often they are the only means of transportation for this community. They must be designed and built for safety, speed and accessibility. These TIGER grants are an imperative part of the full continuum of independent living for people with disabilities. The new transit systems will be a large part of their travel for everyday life.

We also oppose the many amendments being considered that will defund portions of or abandon our nation's passenger rail network. The passenger rail network is another means of transportation used by millions of people with disabilities to travel the nation. This is a form of transportation that is sometimes more economic, safer and faster for them to travel from state to state.

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<sup>5</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (2015, March 6). Employment status of the civilian population by sex, age, and disability status, not seasonally adjusted. Retrieved March 29, 2015 from <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/empst.t06.htm>.

In addition, strong technical assistance support is needed to make all these critical systems work for people with disabilities. The Task Force supports continued unique, targeted technical assistance and training activities at the Federal Transit Administration and also supports proposals to fund such activities out of the trust fund versus general funds.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the T-HUD budget. If you have any questions or would like further information, please contact Dara Baldwin, Senior Public Policy Analyst, National Disability Rights Network, (202) 5408-9514 x102, [dara.baldwin@ndrn.org](mailto:dara.baldwin@ndrn.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "L. Dara Baldwin".

L Dara Baldwin, MPA  
National Disability Rights Network

Cc: The House of Representatives