



**CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS
WITH DISABILITIES**

September 11, 2017

The Honorable Susan Collins, Chair
Member Committee on Appropriations
T-HUD Subcommittee
United States Senate
413 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed, Ranking
Committee on Appropriations
T-HUD Subcommittee
United States Senate
728 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC, 20510

Dear Chairman Collins and Ranking Member Reed:

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 (CCD) Transportation Task Force writes to urge you to protect funding for Department of Transportation (DOT) programs impacting people with disabilities as you negotiate a final FY 2018 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies (T-HUD) appropriations bill.

Adequate accessible transportation is critical to people with disabilities in their day-to-day lives. Transportation can be the difference between someone who is confined to their homes all day or has to rely on others for transportation and someone who is an active and independent member of society. Many people with disabilities rely on public transportation for every-day life which includes but is not limited to shop, visit with friends and family, attend faith services or to get to work. People with disabilities often face difficulties obtaining adequate transportation services for daily travel work – a factor that helps contribute to the high unemployment rate and low labor force participation rate for people with disabilities. The unemployment rate for people with disabilities is currently around 11%, more than twice the unemployment rate for the general population, and the labor force participation rate for people with disabilities is approximately 20%.¹ The level of funding provided for transit and other programs will directly impact the daily lives of people with disabilities.

¹ 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/empsit.t06.htm>.

The Transportation Task Force supports adequate funding for the federal formula grant programs that support transit accessibility for people with disabilities. Specifically, the Section 5310 formula grant program that provides services to promote the mobility and independence of people with disabilities.

The Task Force also supports continued funding and requests increased funding to enhance transit, which also allows many people with disabilities to be mobile and maintain their independence. Although all public transit programs are important, programs supporting rural and small communities are greatly needed to allow access to public transit for people with disabilities in rural areas. Other capital grants and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) programs allow local governments, many of whom are facing continuing budgetary challenges, to continue to provide public transit and paratransit services for people with disabilities.

It has been 27yrs since the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was passed and although much work has been done to create accessible transit, most of the transit system in this country remains inaccessible for people with disabilities. Strong technical assistance support is needed to make all these critical systems work for people with disabilities.

The Task Force supports continued funding for targeted technical assistance and training activities. The funding level for the Standards Development and Technical Assistance program that funds these important activities should be funded at \$9 million the same as last year's funding. In addition, we ask that you include report language that directs FTA to prioritize technical assistance to increase mobility for people with disabilities.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the FY 2018 T-HUD Appropriations bill. If you have any questions or would like further information, please contact Dara Baldwin at the National Disability Rights Network at dara.baldwin@ndrn.org or 202-408-9514 ext. 102.

Sincerely,

Lutheran Services in America Disability Network
National Disability Rights Network (NDRN)
The Arc of the United States
The Jewish Federations of North America
United Spinal Association

Cc: The US Senate Appropriations Committee members
The US Senate