



March 10, 2015

Rep. Caddy McKeown
House Transportation and Economic Development Committee
900 Court Street
Salem, OR 97304

Dear Chair McKeown:

It is my pleasure to write you in support of House Bill 2639, a bill to restore funding and study the impacts of the youth transit pass program in the Lane Transit District (LTD) service area.

Springfield is home to Oregon's 12th largest school district, Springfield Public Schools, which educates more than 10,000 students, 63 percent of whom qualify for free and reduced lunch. Parents in our school district work long hours to make ends meet and have to stretch every dollar to its fullest extent. As a result, most families don't have the schedule flexibility to take their children to and from school if they don't qualify for yellow bus service or stay late for tutoring, extra-curricular activities, sports or other events. All too often, that means students without transportation miss school or do not participate in extra-curricular activities that can be key to helping them stay engaged through graduation.

Last school year, an innovative principal at Springfield's Hamlin Middle School partnered with LTD to buy bus passes for his students who lived within a 1.5 mile radius of the school and didn't qualify for school bus service. As a result, LTD saw a 100% increase in ridership at bus stops near the school in the hours immediately before and after school. We hope that the funding in this bill will allow broader research to see how this benefit can impact student attendance and performance rates.

Unfortunately, we don't have the local resources to fund this program district-wide and seek your assistance. The legislature has historically funded student transit passes, but cut the program in 2009. We are asking for your help to restore the program at LTD, and in return, LTD will study the successes of the program and provide the legislature a detailed report to help model future efforts statewide.

I appreciate your willingness to consider this valuable legislation and would be happy to answer any questions you might have.

Sincerely,

Christine Lundberg
Mayor, City of Springfield