

Submitter: Amber Myre
On Behalf Of: Living Opportunities Inc
Committee: Joint Interim Committee On Transportation
Funding
Measure, Appointment or Topic: LC 2

Co-Chair Senator Rob Wagner
Co-Chair Representative Julie Fahey
Co-Vice Chair Senator Daniel Bonham
Co-Vice Chair Representative Christine Drazan
Members of the Committee: Senator Wlmsvey Campos, Senator Khanh Pham, Senator Bruce Starr, Representative Shelly Boshart Davis, Representative Ben Bowman, Representative Vikki Breese-Iverson, Representative Susan McLain, and Representative Tawna Sanchez,

My name is Amber Myre. I am the CEO of Living Opportunities, a nonprofit based in Jackson County that has supported individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities for over 50 years. I am here in strong support of the proposal to increase the statewide payroll tax from 0.1% to 0.2% to sustain and stabilize transit funding.

In Southern Oregon, our local transit provider, RVTD, has already had to cut 60% of its services due to delays in federal funding, chronic underinvestment, and increased costs. These cuts have been devastating for the people we support. Public transit is not optional; it is essential. It is how people with disabilities get to their jobs, medical appointments, grocery stores, and community activities. When transit routes are cut, independence and opportunity are cut right along with them. These cuts also directly impact paratransit services for those with the most significant disabilities.

For the individuals we serve, missing a bus connection can mean losing a job or missing critical healthcare. Families without reliable transportation options face isolation and increased hardship. These cuts have affected dozens of people receiving our services who now are struggling to figure out day to day how to get to work, how to get to the store, the pharmacy, and more. When you are unable to drive, what options exist for you outside of public transit or begging your friends and family for rides? Some rides will be provided by Direct Support Professionals when available, but in the long run, this is a much more costly option for the system as a whole.

This modest payroll tax increase will double the dedicated funding for transit districts statewide, including RVTD, ensuring that services can stabilize. Offering some reliable and accessible relief for seniors, veterans, workers, and people with disabilities. It is a small investment that pays back many times over in workforce participation, community inclusion, and reduced reliance on crisis systems.

Transit is the backbone of the community. It ensures that Oregonians, regardless of income, geography, or ability, can fully participate in their communities. I urge your support of this proposal so that public transit remains a lifeline for the people of Southern Oregon and across the state.

Thank you for your time and for considering the impact this decision will have on the lives of Oregonians who depend on transit every day.

Sincerely, Amber Myre
Chief Executive Officer, Living Opportunities