



November 5, 2015

H.R. 22, The DRIVE Act Inadequately Funds Transit: Vote NO

Dear Representative:

On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, a coalition charged by its diverse membership of more than 200 national organizations to promote and protect the rights of all persons in the United States, we write to express our concerns with H.R. 22, the Developing a Reliable and Innovative Vision for the Economy (DRIVE) Act. A final transportation bill must provide adequate funding for transit, not contain problematic pay-fors, and should maximize the job creation opportunities that investing in transportation infrastructure provides. In addition, H.R. 22 contains a “pay-for” that is problematic for our communities. We hope that these issues are fixed in conference.

The Leadership Conference believes that Congress must pass long-term, sustained investment in transportation infrastructure that includes full funding for transit. We believe that this can only be achieved by funding the bill with user fees, which is historically how transportation bills have always been funded.

Adequate access to public transit is important for all communities, but particularly for low-income and communities of color, both urban and rural. While the Senate funding level is adequate, the transit funding level in the House bill is not enough to meet the needs of underserved communities. In addition, we oppose use of an offset that extends the expiration date for enterprise guarantee fees. This pay-for raises the cost of homeownership for American families at a time when our economy most needs a vibrant, affordable housing sector.

The Leadership Conference is also disappointed at the missed opportunity posed by the exclusion of the Mobility, Opportunity, and Vocation Enabling (MOVE) Act from floor debate. Representative Ellison offered this bill as an amendment in the House Rules Committee, and it would require the U.S. Department of Transportation to establish performance measures for accessibility for low-income and minority populations and people with disabilities; provide a cumulative increase in residents’ connection to jobs; and provide a variety of transportation choices to users, such as public transportation, bike and pedestrian pathways, and roads and highways.

Better transportation policy can help fight income inequality and we consider access to transportation a civil rights issue because it means access to jobs, affordable housing, health care, schools, and child care. The MOVE Act would require U.S. DOT to measure how transportation projects and investments measure up in terms of creating access to jobs for the nation’s most vulnerable communities, including people of color, people with disabilities, and low-income populations. This was an opportunity to make smart investments in these communities, and we hope that the final bill coming out of the conference committee will include it.

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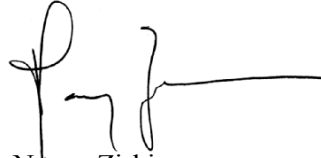


We believe that long-term funding for our transportation system is critical to ensuring the prosperity of our economy and our nation. We ask that the issues we have highlighted in this letter be fixed in conference so that this important legislation can move forward. Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, please contact Emily Chatterjee, Senior Counsel, at (202) 466-3648.

Sincerely,



Wade Henderson
President & CEO



Nancy Zirkin
Executive Vice President