

March 10, 2021

SUBJECT: Senate Bill 141

Dear Speaker Huston, Representative Behning, Representative Speedy, and Chairman Pressel:

As SB 141 advances to the House of Representatives, we – as human service organizations within United Way of Central Indiana’s community partner network – urge you to consider the hundreds of thousands of families and individuals who will be harmed the most by this legislation.

Our elected leaders may not know anyone who rides and relies on IndyGo as their primary mode of transportation, but we do.

They’re senior citizens, who ride the bus to and from their medical appointments and to pick up their prescriptions at the pharmacy.

They’re children and adolescents, who use IndyGo to get to school and access after-school programs that enrich their education and development.

They’re hardworking Hoosiers with disabilities, who would otherwise have no way to maintain employment without a ride to and from a meaningful job.

These people form the fabric of our communities. Their success – our success – depends on access to decent, reliable, and affordable public transportation.

The ability to get to the places where we need to go – to access opportunity, education, health care, food and more – is one of our most basic human needs. That’s why nearly 40% of the organizations that belong to United Way of Central Indiana’s human services network are located on or in walking distance of the Red Line and proposed routes for the Blue and Purple Lines. If passed, SB 141 will not only threaten the bus rapid transit (BRT) projects that have the potential to transform Central Indiana, but also the financial health of the entire IndyGo system.

But those most hurt by SB 141 will be the tens of thousands of families and individuals we serve whose lives and futures hinge on access to quality public transportation. Each day these families are working hard to accomplish their goals and dreams. However, to keep on this path they require what most of us take for granted, a ride. For many, quality public transportation is the catalyst for changing one’s life, it is the determining factor for what food, healthcare, jobs, and educational opportunities can be accessed.

We not only know people who ride the bus, we know people who need the bus. Undermining the state’s largest mass transit provider will keep the poor in poverty and stagnate our efforts to improve economic mobility, a measure of which Indianapolis ranks 46th of the top 50 cities in the U.S.

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The consequences of SB 141, if the bill continues to advance in the House, are dire. That's why we strongly urge House leadership to kill this legislation and maintain its focus in the second half of session on productive policies that move Indiana forward.

Sincerely,

Drew Neddo, Senior Mentoring Relationship Specialist, **Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Indiana**

Ali King, Executive Director, **Central Indiana Youth for Christ**

Lisa Wells, Executive Director, **Down Syndrome Indiana**

Linda Diakite Karressy, Founder, **Insight Financial Group**

James Taylor, CEO, **John Boner Neighborhood Centers**

Miriam Acevedo Davis, President & CEO, **La Plaza.inc.**

Allison Luthe, Executive Director, **Martin Luther King Community Center**

Sarah Williams, Public Policy & Advocacy Director, **MCCOY (Marion County Commission on Youth, Inc.)**

Julia Huffman, President & CEO, **Noble, Inc.**

Leigh Crawford, Outreach Coordinator, **Patachou Foundation**

Jennifer Vigran, CEO, **Second Helpings**

Peggy Frame, Executive Director, **Southeast Community Services**

Constance Sherman, Executive Director, **St. Mary' s Child Center**

Sharon Pierce, President & CEO, **The Villages of Indiana**

Ann Murtlow, President & CEO, **United Way of Central Indiana**

Robert Hawthorne, Executive Director, **Westside Community Development Corp.**

Shana Gilbert, Executive Director, **Youth Connections**