



## House Transportation SCR 4004 March 16, 2023

Representative Ruby and committee members. I am Kirsten Dvorak, Executive Director of The Arc of North Dakota. We have six chapters throughout North Dakota that advocate for individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (IDD) for full inclusion in their community of choice.

On behalf of our organizations representing people with disabilities across the state, we support SCR 4004.

People with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (IDD) lack sufficient access to reliable, accessible, safe public and private transportation modes within North Dakota. These barriers prevent people with IDD from meaningful participation in everyday activities that promote high-quality community living experiences. In the U.S., millions of individuals with disabilities use public transit to maintain their autonomy and participate fully in society, and for many, it's the only option. However, even where accessible public transportation exists, adults with IDD consider transportation options inadequate.

Federal and state legislation encourages economic self-sufficiency for people with all types of disabilities requiring transportation. Inadequate transportation inhibits community involvement, including successful employment. There is insufficient funding for those providing the transportation to meet their customer's needs. Rural residents often face the most significant challenge due to the lack of public transportation, limited private transportation options, and long distances between destinations.

Access to accessible transportation services is an increasingly important issue in North Dakota. Local transportation businesses and cities must balance the costs of providing these services with the benefits of providing them. This includes the costs of purchasing, operating, and maintaining accessible vehicles and the costs associated with training employees and acquiring the necessary technology. A key challenge is finding the resources to fund these services, particularly during economic uncertainty.

Areas that the study could be included but not limited to:

- Fiscal impact of providing accessible transportation services.
- Modify existing funding formulas to support accessible transportation services.
- States must consider the unique needs of those with disabilities and specialized transportation services.
- Ensure that individuals with disabilities can access the necessary services.

In conclusion, states face several challenges and barriers to expanding and improving accessible transportation services, including the fiscal impact of providing such services, the need to modify existing funding formulas to support the expansion of accessible transportation, and the modifications required to anticipate the responsibilities of public entities under the American Disabilities Act. (ADA)

Kristen Dvorak  
701-22-1854