

Mr. Chairman, and other members of the committee, my name is Nathan Leier and I'm from a family farm near Strasburg. I vote and live in District 8.

I am testifying in support of Bill No. 4004. Transportation, in my opinion is a major obstacle for everyone with a disability who relies on this service to get to and from destinations. Being involved with groups such as North Dakota State Council on Developmental Disabilities (NDSCDD) & Advocates Leading their Lives (ALL), I've heard over and over how this is a huge problem.

A little information before I get started. When the term "paratransit" is used, this is a door-to-door service. An example would be getting picked up at the front door of my house and taken to the front door of my doctor's office. When I say "public transit", I'm referring to a service on fixed routes. An example of this would be, getting on at a bus stop and getting off at the public square bus stop. Both services have their pros and cons.

The biggest challenge faced by the paratransit services is the wait time and the ride time. I am employed and rely on transit to get me to and from work. My job starts at 8:00 a.m. I get up at 5:30 a.m. just to get ready and get on the bus at 6:45 a.m. to hopefully get to work at my start time. Now let's reverse that, with an unpredictable time of arrival at home. For this example, I'll just say that I was on the paratransit for an hour to get to work and an hour to get home. That adds 2 hours to my day and it gets exhausting to worry about.

The public transit is much more efficient when it comes to travel time but with North Dakota weather, it's always a challenge to get to and from a bus stop. For instance, this public transit service isn't even an option for me simply because the nearest bus stop is too far away from my both my residence and my work.

As you observed, some sort of a combination of the services needs to be realized.

Let's make an impact together and get this bill passed for everyone who relies on these services!

Thank you for your time listening to my testimony today and thank you for serving the GREAT State of North Dakota!

I would be happy to answer any questions that you have for me.

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