

Mr. Chairman and members of the Senate Transportation Committee. My name is Royce Schultze, Executive Director of the Dakota Center for Independent Living in Bismarck, and I am writing in support of SCR 4004.

My testimony will be brief because I would be repeating the information other letters of support are talking about. Accessible transportation has been an issue for the consumers we work with for a few years. With limited hours on holidays and Sundays, it is difficult for anyone using paratransit to attend family functions, shop or socialize during those days. Our fixed-route buses do not run on holidays or Sundays, making it impossible for these riders to do anything unless they walk or are lucky enough to catch a ride. Our transit system is the only option we have in Bismarck/Mandan/Lincoln since we do not have a taxi service. Unfortunately, these issues are due to a lack of funding for transit services and the shortage of drivers for the buses. In closing, it would be my hope that you pass SCR 4004 to study accessible transportation in the state for older adults and individuals with disabilities, so all North Dakotans have access to transportation.

Thank you