



House Transportation
SB 2254
March 6, 2025

Chairperson and members of the committee,

My name is Kirsten Dvorak, and I am the Executive Director of The Arc of North Dakota, an organization committed to advocating for and supporting individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. I am here today to support Senate Bill 2254, which allocates essential funding for fixed-route city and paratransit transportation services.

Transportation is essential for the independence of individuals with disabilities, providing access to jobs, education, healthcare, and community involvement. Yet, public transportation—particularly paratransit services—is a necessity rather than a luxury for many. Having reliable and affordable transportation enables individuals with disabilities to engage fully in society and uphold their quality of life.

The \$2,000,000 allocated in SB 2254 for the Department of Transportation to enhance fixed-route and paratransit services represents a significant investment. Data and research consistently show that:

- Access to paratransit services enhances employment results: National data on disability employment indicates that transportation barriers rank high among the reasons for unemployment in individuals with disabilities. A strong transportation system actively promotes workforce participation and economic independence.¹
- Improved transportation access leads to better healthcare outcomes: Many individuals with disabilities depend on public transport for medical appointments, from essential therapies to routine healthcare visits. When reliable transportation is lacking, these individuals encounter delays in receiving care, which can exacerbate health issues and raise healthcare expenses.²
- Transportation facilitates community engagement: Individuals with disabilities deserve equal opportunities to participate in their communities, including attending social gatherings, shopping, and engaging in civic activities. Limited transportation services result in greater isolation for individuals with disabilities, impacting their quality of life.³

The legislative management study required by SB 2254 holds significant importance. With North Dakota's population increasing and demographics shifting, creating a long-term funding model for transportation services is essential. This study aims to guarantee that North Dakota's fixed-route and paratransit systems stay accessible, fair, and sustainable for the future.

SB 2254 is not just about funding transportation but about investing in the independence, dignity, and inclusion of individuals with disabilities. On behalf of The Arc of North Dakota and the thousands of individuals and families we serve, I urge you to support this bill. By doing so, you will be affirming North Dakota's commitment to ensuring that every citizen—regardless of ability—has the opportunity to live, work, and thrive in our communities.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Kirsten Dvorak
Executive Director
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¹ National Disability Employment Data, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, showing that individuals with disabilities experience significantly higher unemployment rates due to transportation barriers. Available at: <https://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsdisability.htm>

² American Public Transportation Association Report, detailing how public transit access correlates with improved healthcare access and reduced emergency visits for people with disabilities. Available at: <https://www.apta.com/research-technical-resources/research-reports/>

³ National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research, highlighting the role of accessible transportation in promoting social inclusion and community participation for individuals with disabilities. Available at: <https://acl.gov/about-acl/about-national-institute-disability-independent-living-and-rehabilitation-research>