

## **LWVO Action Resolution**

League Proposing the Resolution: League of Women Voters of Greater Cleveland

Specific League Position the Resolution Supports: National position: Meeting Basic Human Needs:

–*Preventing and Reducing Poverty*, which supports policies and programs designed to "provide support services such as . . . transportation."

–*Access to Transportation*, which supports "energy-efficient and environmentally sound transportation systems" that "afford better access to housing and jobs."

–*Criteria for Supportive Services*, which lists transportation as one of the six most important of these services.

### Background Information:

Although transit systems in Ohio secure more than half of their funding from local sources, they cannot cover all their expenses. Also, according to the Ohio Department of Transportation's own "Ohio Statewide Transit Needs Study" ("Needs Study"), demand for transit in Ohio will increase due to an aging population and younger workers who prefer using transit to driving. As city centers continue to attract more residents, demand for public transit, including intercity and regional transit, will rise.

The State of Ohio has generally been reducing funding for transit since 2000, when it spent \$44 million from the General Revenue Fund (GRF). In 2014, the state's contribution was \$27 million in a combination of GRF and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) funds. In budget years 2018 and 2019, funding for transit will increase to \$40 million each year, again in a mixture of GRF and FHWA funds. Unfortunately, local transit funding will be reduced drastically during the same period. Approximately \$38 million a year was lost to local systems when the Medicaid Managed Care Organization (MCO) sales tax ended in 2017. The state plans to contribute \$34 million to compensate for the loss—but only in 2018. That means that in 2019, although the state's transit contribution will still be \$40 million, the local contribution will be down by \$38 million. When a backlog of almost \$275 million for equipment maintenance and repair is added to the equation, Ohio's transit outlook is dire.

The Needs Study has analyzed this situation and recommended solutions that include increased funding by the state. With no such state action, Ohio's largest transit system, Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (GCRTA), will be forced to reduce service by 10 percent and raise fares, even for paratransit. The other systems will have no choice but to take similar measures.

### Body of Resolution:

Whereas, All residents of Ohio need access to places of employment or education, to housing, and to other facilities that provide needed services or materials, regardless of ability to own or operate a motor vehicle; and

Whereas, The existing transit systems in the state, both urban and rural, are unable to meet all of their current expenses and are facing expanded funding needs in the future; and

Whereas, The ODOT has recently completed the Needs Study, which has analyzed the present and future transit needs in the state and has made recommendations for meeting those needs;

Therefore, be it resolved that the League of Women Voters of Ohio, meeting in Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio, in state Convention on May 7, 2017, urges the General Assembly to support implementation of the Needs Study's recommendations, including state funding of 10 percent of statewide transit expenses.