

In Complete Support of Rep. Tabke's HF 2045 Transit Enforcement

Good morning Chair Hornstein, and esteemed members of the Transportation Finance and Policy Committee. I thank you for your time in considering our testimony on the **Representative Tabke's bill, HF 2045**, Transit Enforcement governing requirements.

Our family includes a proud military veteran residing in Eden Prairie, Minnesota, and we are in full support of this long overdue bill.

Since the pandemic, according to the U.S. Travel Association and as highlighted by the our State's Explore Minnesota Tourism office as well as Minnesota Department of Revenue, Minnesota's tourism industry has suffered more than **\$12 Billion dollars in travel spending losses**.

Minnesota public transit is both our forgotten child and a disgraceful waste of hard-earned taxpayer dollars. The negative impact to Minnesota is told by what is not seen. Museums, restaurants, shops and stores that are closing or not hiring because there are little to no customers because people cannot get there. Businesses and organizations in Minnesota are tired of planning events that took a lot of time and money, but then are attended by almost nobody because of the weather and/or people who wanted to come, but were physically unable to arrive at the venue.

Two of our family members and our child attended a Minnesota Twins game not long ago and took the light rail there. It was almost an hour trip there, and another hour back. The light rail was dirty and the trip unpleasant. After the trip was over, both family members said they would never, ever again take the light rail anywhere.

We have planned to go to cultural events, museums, shops, stores, events, etc. in the cities, but each weekend, trips are canceled because of icy dangerous weather and long commute times from our home to the cities, and not wanting to find and pay for parking. All things that public transit literally exists for, but cannot be used for.

We are on neighborhood social media sites regularly and plenty of people are traveling outside of Minnesota, but never once have we read or heard "I am taking the Minnesota light rail to get to the airport," or anywhere else.

Even "staycations" or weekend getaways into Minneapolis and St. Paul or the Twin Cities suburbs have been shuttered and canceled for trips outside of Minnesota, taking Minnesota dollars with them, for the very same reasons- nobody wants to commute here.

If Minnesota can't even convince our own residents to visit Minnesota attractions, how are we going to convince potential out- of- state tourists to make Minnesota a travel destination? At the same time, the new influx of people moving to Minnesota are going to find the same problem- being limited to where they live and not being able to get from point A to point B, whether to or from the Cities. Businesses and government offices will continue to lose revenue.

It's already been 3 years since the pandemic. Many have downsized to one car or none. It's a nonpartisan issue- how people are commuting and traveling has now completely changed.

It's time for Minnesota to make the forgotten child part of our state's family and restore confidence in the people of Minnesota.

Respectfully,
Chris, Mehri and Sidney McLaughlin
Eden Prairie