



June 9, 2021

Senator Sherrod Brown
Chair
Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs
Committee

Senator Pat Toomey
Ranking Member
Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs
Committee

Senator Tina Smith
Subcommittee Chair
Housing, Transportation and Community
Development Subcommittee

Senator Mike Rounds
Ranking Member
Housing, Transportation and Community
Development Subcommittee

Dear Chairs and Ranking Members:

On behalf of members of the United Motorcoach Association (UMA), American Bus Association (ABA) and the National School Transportation Association (NSTA), we write to register our strong objections to any provisions weakening the charter bus protections in transit law in your surface transportation reauthorization transit title.

As you know, public transit agencies are prohibited from doing charter work in competition with private bus operators. These protections have been in the law for over 47 years. Private bus operators cannot compete fairly with subsidized transit agencies. Charter work is the bread and butter of the majority of the bus and motorcoach industry. Private school bus operators also do charter work on evenings and weekends outside of regular home to school bus transportation. The charter regulation was revised significantly in 2008 at the direction of Congress through a multi-year negotiated rulemaking process which all of our organizations participated in, along with public transit agencies, transit labor and the Federal Transit Administration. The rule was significantly clarified and improved through this process and has worked extremely well since. We do not believe any major issues exist with it on either the public transit or private operator side.

We implore you to avoid any weakening of this important and long-standing protection. At a time when our industries remain crippled from the pandemic with loss of travel and tourism and schools not doing in-person learning for the bulk of the last year, any reduction in this protection would be devastating. The \$2 billion Covid relief program created to help these industries, the CERTS Act, was passed by Congress in December but still has not been released, making our members' situations even worse. While some work is returning, many of our companies are just hanging on to keep their doors open and we do not expect a full recovery for any of these industries until 2022.

We implore you to avoid any reduction of these protections which would be devastating to these companies and their valued employees.

Appreciate your consideration of these important issues.

Sincerely,

United Motorcoach Association

American Bus Association

National School Transportation Association

cc: All Members of the Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee