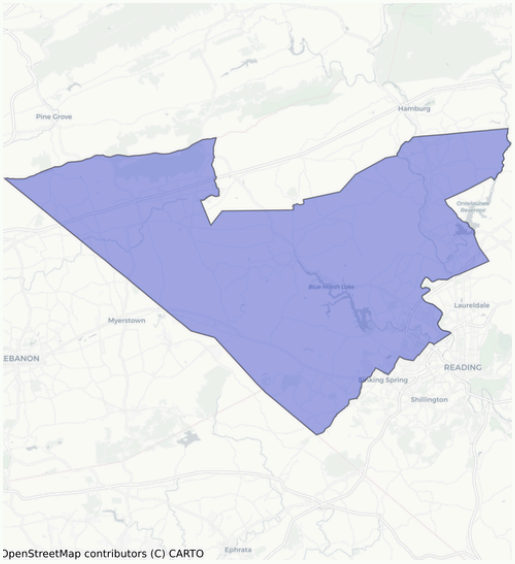
Pennsylvania State House District 5

REP. ERIC WEAKNECHT

CLIMATE CABINET EDUCATION

Overview

Pennsylvania's Shared Ride/Paratransit services save people money and provide a critical lifeline for residents in rural areas and cities, because they provide affordable transportation options to critical destinations like healthcare.



Shared Ride services are particularly important for seniors, disabled people, and veterans, because they ensure people can live independently, access healthcare and social services, and participate in social and economic life. In many rural communities, Shared Ride/Demand Response services are the *only transit options available.*

Funding for ADA-required Shared Ride and Paratransit services is failing to keep up with rising costs, forcing transit agencies to redirect resources away from other needed transit services. **The domino effect has created a crisis for all transit riders in Pennsylvania.** In the short term, appropriately funding Shared Ride and Paratransit services to their ADA-required levels will allow small transit agencies across Pennsylvania to stabilize their near-term operations, like fixed-route services. Once this immediate crisis is addressed, we can get to work on developing a long-anticipated comprehensive transportation funding solution that will grow PA's economy and lower families' bills at the same time.

Transit Saves Lives

Some of Pennsylvania's most vulnerable populations face significant barriers to access important social, medical, and economic services. In fact, in many cases, they would be unable to access these services at all without transit and Shared Ride/Paratransit services.

Notably, Pennsylvania has the third-largest rural population of any state, the fourth-largest veteran population, and one of the country's fastest aging populations. Seniors, veterans, and low income households are likewise over represented in rural communities compared to urban and suburban ones.

In House District 5

13,579 residents
are **65 years** or **older.**

7,822 residents
have a **disability.**

3,249 residents
are **veterans.**

Source: US Census Bureau ACS 5-Year 2023

Transit Reduces Household Bills

An average Pennsylvania family can save $1,678 annually by switching some car trips to other choices like transit. For a Pennsylvanian living off Social Security, that would amount to nearly **a month's worth of additional income.**

Transit Fuels Pennsylvania's Economy

Fully funding transit is critical to supporting both vulnerable populations and people looking for affordable and practical pollution-free transportation choices.

Millions of Pennsylvania residents rely on transit daily. Despite temporary reductions in ridership in the first years of the COVID-19 pandemic, the high cost of personal vehicles and worsening traffic is bringing many people back to transit. Many people, including seniors, disabled people, and essential workers, never stopped using transit. Nationally, this is reflected in the fact **Shared Ride/ Paratransit services have experienced the strongest ridership recovery** of any transit mode.

There are **387 million total transit trips** made in Pennsylvania annually, including...

- 49 million transit trips made by transit dependent populations, which includes seniors, disabled people, and individuals accessing medical appointments, of these...
- 37 million were made by seniors.

Many families need reliable public transit in House District 5

13,579 Population over 65 years

7,822 Population living with a disability

695 Households without vehicle access

15,878 Student-age population

Average Annual Miles Traveled by Car (per person)

Investing in good transit helps everyone. Transit is especially important for seniors, disabled people, and other transit dependent people. Pennsylvanians who depend on both fixed-route services like buses and trains and Shared Ride/Paratransit services throughout the Commonwealth and especially in rural communities face high costs and health risks if these services do not receive adequate funding support.

Read our report on rural and small town transit!

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