

Submitter: Kate Walker

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation Reinvestment

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2025

To my elected representatives,

My name is Kate Walker. I'm a disabled veteran, an autistic transgender woman, a spouse and parent, and an accomplished software engineer. I'm writing to you today to talk about transportation and automobiles.

My father gave me my first car when I was sixteen - he was tired of driving me back and forth to college. It was October 1994, and I had just passed my driver's test. I pulled into the driveway and my father told me: "This car is yours now". Then he went into the house and left me sitting in a beat-up '85 Ford with a cracked engine block.

For the next 30 years I drove myself to school, work, shopping, and everywhere else that I ever wanted to go. It cost me hundreds of thousands of dollars to keep a car on the road - I've calculated it cost me well over \$200K in automobile expenses during the years that I had to drive. I've been able to live without a car a few times, such as the years I was deployed - our military bases in Iraq were all very walkable, despite the oppressive desert heat.

Other than those few rare exceptions, for most of my life I've had to drive a car in order to have basic transportation.

Last year, I sold my car in Texas and moved to Portland. I've lived here for a year and I've never needed a car. With my ebike I get groceries, go to restaurants and shows, ride down to the river, and go on amazing group rides with friends. My new job is a short bus ride away from my apartment, so I have a backup transportation method if I don't want to ride my bicycle. My life is enabled by the safe greenways and decent public transit - features of the built environment that weren't available in the suburbs I've lived in before.

Since I've moved here I've also spent a lot of time advocating against cars. I could write a very long letter about the ways in which the automobile ruins cities and small towns. I could write about the horrible safety hazards posed by cars. I could write about the awful air pollution that causes so much respiratory disease. I could write about the history of this country and how much wealth we've squandered on cars. I could write about the awful effects of climate change, a major portion of which is due to the internal combustion engines in our cars. I could write about the physics of transportation and energy use, about how we need to reduce the size and speed of vehicles to support equality in a less-abundant-energy future.

I know that these points are familiar to you, so I won't bother repeating them. I also know that the opposition doesn't believe in any of those things - their religion is Profit, and no amount of death or destruction will dissuade them from the pursuit of their god.

I'm writing this letter because I hope to bolster your spirit. You have constituents that are passionate about transportation. We believe that transportation is a human right and that automobiles are a privilege. By limiting the damage that automobiles can do, you're taking profit away from big business, and that means that you're going to have to fight for every penny. I want you to know that you're supported in this fight, and that your citizens are fighting alongside you.

Thank you for your service,
- Kate