

Statement of Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU)
SB 511
House Commerce Committee
March 15, 2022

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on behalf of the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU), the largest labor organization representing transit workers in the United States and Canada. Founded in 1892, the ATU today is comprised of more than 180,000 members in 267 local unions spread across 46 states and nine provinces, including workers in Kansas at the Topeka Metropolitan Transit Authority.

The ATU strongly opposes Senate Bill 511 and has substantial concerns about the bill. This ill-conceived legislation would have the unintended consequence of preventing the flow of millions of dollars in federal infrastructure funds to your state. Bill 511 would render the public transit systems in Kansas ineligible for Federal Transit Administration grants which, pursuant to 49 U.S.C. Section 5333(b), are conditioned on the continuation of certain collective bargaining rights.

Additionally, we have concerns that Bill 511 would burden Kansas employees seeking to exercise their right to free association. Kansas employees are already free to authorize, refrain from authorizing, or revoke any authorization for the deduction of union dues from their wages. Bill 511 would subject employees to red tape by requiring them to regularly update paperwork even when there is no change in desires on the part of the employee or other change in circumstances.