

October 21, 2009

The Honorable Kate Ebli,
Chair, Tax Policy Committee
Michigan House of Representatives
N0990 House Office Building
P.O. Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909-7514

Good day Representative Ebli:

My name is Michael Fox, Jr., and I am a resident of Adrian, Michigan. As both a recipient and advocate, I know firsthand the difference the Workers On Wheels (W.O.W.) Program administered through Goodwill Industries of Southeastern Michigan, is making in the lives of local residents. In February 2004, my then fiancé and now wife of four and a half years got into a motor vehicle accident. At that point, we had to rely on our limited public transportation services and the few friends we have in the area to get where we needed to care for our family. In June 2004, I submitted my W.O.W. application and by September 2004, I was in my 1997 Plymouth Voyager that I will have now owned 5 years. Enough about me; you can read about my educational, personal and professional accomplishments on the next page.

I write on behalf of the countless families who rely on the W.O.W. Program to assist them with obtaining a dependable vehicle that will allow them to meet the needs of their families by maintaining decent employment and earning competitive wages. It also allows them to finish college degrees, seek better employment opportunities, and serve their communities in more profound ways.

It is individuals like my friend: a wife, mother of three, and 2008 graduate from Adrian College with a Bachelor of Arts degree that speaks for the necessity to continue offering incentives for donors and funding the W.O.W. Program. She has a similar situation to mine from 5 years back; being in a motor vehicle accident earlier that year which left her family without transportation while she was trying to finish her education. Also, having to rely on our limited public transportation services and the few friends in town to assist with the care of her family's basic needs (appointments, groceries, and more) on top of, managing their own busy schedules. At the same time, getting herself and her husband to the job interviews they were granted. What are they to do if offered a position today, but are still without means of transportation to get to and from the site or attend important evening commitments?

I am particularly pleased that 367 families have been blessed with a vehicle because of the generous car donations and the financial partnership of DHS over the last several years. I strongly urge you to encourage the full House and Senate to vote in favor of continuing to provide the tax credits for commendable car donors. These credits and funding brings many deserving and disadvantaged families in Lenawee County access to reliable transportation. I truly understand the ongoing budget constraints our state is facing, but not renewing these credits will just make matters worse. The investment now will only strengthen Michigan's economy by graduating four-year and advanced degree holders and elevating productive citizens into successful professional careers.

Thank you, Representative Ebli, for working toward the renewal of donor tax incentives and the W.O.W. Program's contract in October 2011, so funding can be used to serve and place countlessly more Lenawee County families on the ride toward realizing their potential and achieving true success.

Respectfully,



Michael Fox, Jr.
2004 W.O.W. Minivan Owner
2007 W.O.W. Recipient of the Year

Enclosure

Cc: Dudley Spade, State Representative, 57th House District
Cameron Brown, State Senator, 16th Senate District

Michael Fox, Jr.
October 28, 2009

Good Morning Madam Chair and members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to express my concerns about how eliminating tax credits for car donations would devastate the Lenawee County community and the families that rely on the Workers on Wheels (W.O.W.) Program to provide them with dependable vehicles for the better care of their families.

I come before you on behalf of both current and future car donors and recipients of those donated vehicles to say you must continue providing these tax credits. When it come to donors, these tax incentives is the State's way to also extend its gratitude for the donor's decision to give their vehicle to a deserving and disadvantaged family rather than trade it in for a new one or leave it in their driveway to rot and rust. When it comes to the recipients and their families, continuing to offer these incentives to donors is the State's way of showing them how much it's behind current and future successes they will achieve together.

What are they to do if offered a position today, but are still without means of transportation to get to and from the site or attend important evening commitments? This is a question I pose in my letter and with the removal of these incentives, for families in Lenawee County that means the opportunity would have to be declined and the commitment missed because our limited public transportation services are not very consistent or effective when it comes to getting to and from places in a timely manner. The same goes for relying on friends who have commitments of their own to attend while providing rides or lending their vehicles to that needy friend(s).

The friend I reference in my letter was blessed with a vehicle through the W.O.W. Program earlier this year. Although she has not landed a full-time job since graduating she is diligently seeking employment on a daily bases, in which I am confident she will land that dream job hopefully soon. It took me 42 applications and 9 interviews after my AmeriCorps*VISTA term to land my employment with the Siena Heights University Upward Bound Program that I have been with two years as of last week.

In closing, I hope we have your full support to continue extending these tax credits at the current level for selfless car donors. In addition, I hope we will have your full support in renewing and fully funding the contract for the W.O.W. Program in October 2011. Thank you.