

~~HR 107~~

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COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE :
: PUBLIC HEARING :
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Re: SENIOR CITIZIENS - :
ACCESS TRANSPSORTATION :
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YWCA
4th & Wood Streets
AUDITORIUM
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Met pursuant to notice at 1:00 P.M. on October 17, 1985.

BEFORE:

- REPRESENTATIVE GORDON LINTON, CHAIRMAN
- MR. SCOTT CASPER - EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, HOUSE TRANS-
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
- MR. PAUL LANDIS - MINORITY STAFF PERSON
- REPRESENTATIVE RICHARD GEIST
- REPRESENTATIVE CHARLES NAHILL, JR.
- REPRESENTATIVE WM. LLOYD, JR.
- REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPH STEIGHNER
- MS. ETHEL TRACEY (FOR REPRESENTATIVE PETRONE)
- REPRESENTATIVE TOM MURPHY
- REPRESENTATIVE MIKE VEON

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1:00 P.M.

CHAIRMAN LINTON: Good afternoon. We're going to try to get started. We'd like for everyone in the room to have a seat. I'm quite sure there will be a need for you to talk from time to time to those who are around you, but if we can try and keep that to a minimum so that we all can hear the proceedings today.

My name is Gordon Linton from Philadelphia County, and I am chairing the hearings this afternoon on the Section 203, Shared Ride Program, better known in this area as the Access Program.

We have today members of the House of Representatives Transportation Committee, and we want to solicit testimony from many of you regarding what we consider very vital, and also an extremely important and necessary program. I just want to try to set the tone today, that it's our intent to listen and get information from each and every one of you, particularly about your utilization of the program, some of the concerns you may have about some of the proposed regulations or some of the suggested regulations so that we can get a better fix on where we need to go to make sure that we have adequate and continued access to transportation for our seniors in the Commonwealth.

So I want to let you know from the very beginning, that is our intent, to make sure that the Access Program as you

1 know it continues so that you can have access to the vital
2 programs that you need.

3 We've understood that there have been some abuses in
4 the program and we're concerned about that. But we're also
5 concerned about maintaining a lifeline program that you can
6 use to get throughout the community.

7 I'd like to introduce to you members of our committee
8 who are with us today. To my far left I have Miss Ethel
9 Tracey who's representing Representative Tom Petrone. Next
10 to Miss Tracey we have Representative Joe Steighner from
11 Butler County. Next to Joe Steighner we have Representative
12 Bill Lloyd from Somerset County. To my immediate left is
13 Scott Casper, the Executive Director of the House
14 Transportation Committee. To my immediate right we have Paul
15 Landis, also the staff person with the House Transportation
16 Committee. To my far right, Representative Charles Nahill
17 from Montgomery County.

18 We have a full agenda today, and we're expecting to
19 receive a large amount of testimony. This is our second
20 hearing that's been held by this Task Force of the House
21 Transportation Committee. We started in Philadelphia, and
22 this is our second hearing. We intend to have at least one,
23 and it looks like now possibly another hearing here in the
24 Allegheny County area because of the large amount of
25 individuals from this neighborhood who want to testify.

1 I would like to call up our first witness. I believe
2 The Honorable Tom Forrester, Chairman of the Allegheny County
3 Board of Commissioners, who'll be represented by Bob Nelkin.
4 Bob Nelkin, representing the Honorable Tom Forrester.

5 MR. NELKIN: Members of the General Assembly and
6 staff, we welcome you to the number one, most liveable city
7 and region in the country. Every time that this room is full
8 of interested citizens on a public matter there has been a
9 great change in public policy, and I'm sure today will be
10 another example of that. Commissioner Forrester is very
11 interested in this subject and has asked me to present his
12 testimony.

13 Elderly citizens, their relatives, and their friends
14 have flooded the offices of the Allegheny County Board of
15 Commissioners with letters and calls opposing reductions of
16 transportation services under Section 203 of the Pennsylvania
17 Urban Mass Transportation Act. The volume of calls and
18 letters indicates the potential broad impact of the proposed
19 changes. This public hearing serves to inform the Members of
20 the General Assembly and the senior citizens at the Pittsburgh
21 region about the possible adverse consequences of the
22 suggested service restrictions.

23 Interested citizens should note that these changes are,
24 at the current time, only proposals and may again be rescinded
25 if opposition is expressed to the Executive and Legislative

1 Branches of the Commonwealth.

2 Allegheny County has one of the oldest and most rapidly
3 aging populations of any county in the Commonwealth, or any
4 county in the nation. Because of the number of senior
5 citizens we have the most to lose by this and other cutbacks
6 of services to the elderly by Federal or State governments.

7 Although they have been modified since they were first
8 proposed last spring, the regulations will reduce
9 transportation to critically needed medical treatment by
10 chemotherapy and kidney dialysis. The regulations will add
11 bureaucratic obstacles for the senior citizens seeking
12 transportation to medical services, and the regulations will
13 reduce the use of meals, and other services, and medical
14 services which help elderly citizens to continue to live
15 independently in their homes and their communities.

16 In fairness, the policy makers in Harrisburg probably
17 did not foresee these results. A quick look at the local
18 scene and the possible adverse consequences, if these
19 regulations are implemented I hope that look will stimulate
20 some possible changes in the regulations.

21 First of all, the regulations as proposed will reduce
22 transportation to critically needed medical treatment. In
23 Allegheny County -- and this is the most important point of
24 our testimony -- this specific funding source that we're here
25 to talk about today is used for transportation to medical

1 services. Fifty-four percent (54%) of the trips were provided
2 to critical high-risk categories, such as twenty-three
3 thousand (23,000) trips for radiation and chemotherapy;
4 twenty thousand (20,000) trips for kidney dialysis; fourteen
5 thousand (14,000) trips for adult day care so the people can
6 avoid institutionalization; and seventeen thousand (17,000)
7 trips by at-risk clients of the Triple "A"'s protective
8 services.

9 The regulation makers must not have known the gravity
10 of the medical problems for which the elderly used this
11 transportation in our county. Any across-the-board
12 restrictions, as proposed here, mean that the elderly going
13 to cancer therapy, dialysis, or other life saving treatments
14 will not be eligible and will not receive transportation. At
15 least some of those people will not.

16 Our second point, the regulations as proposed will add
17 bureaucratic obstacles for senior citizens who are seeking
18 transportation to medical services. The regulations will
19 require additional procedural steps and the attendant delays
20 for users. Some of the documentation which we figure will be
21 required under the new regulations might include that bus
22 stops are more than a quarter mile from the users origin or
23 destination, that PennDot has approved the physician's
24 certificate that the person is functionally unable to use bus
25 transportation, that there is a shorter to bus transportation,

1 that there are dangerous conditions, that there are
2 extraordinary circumstances, and probably many other things
3 that would have to be documented. We think it should be
4 possible to control this program and to control the cost
5 without adding procedural steps, paperwork, or delays.

6 The third point is that the cutbacks will reduce the
7 use of medical services and other prevention services, which
8 allow senior citizens to live independently in their homes
9 and in their communities. In Allegheny County forty-six
10 percent (46%) of the transportation is for elderly persons to
11 receive general medical care, which does allow them to stay
12 at home or to stay with their relatives.

13 If you don't cut the trips for the vital medical
14 services that we talked about before, you're probably going
15 to have to cut the trips for these general medical purposes.
16 It doesn't make sense for the Commonwealth to promote general
17 health and prevention services for our older population but
18 make it difficult or impossible for elderly persons to get to
19 those services.

20 We'd like to propose some alternate methods to control
21 the cost, and these are listed in order of preference from
22 our point of view.

23 Number one (1): Tighter monitoring and correction of
24 abuses in the specific counties where the program is not well
25 run. We hear that there are such areas. If that's true,

1 let's control those costs. That solution, instead of broad
 2 base cuts, would allow us to continue in Allegheny County
 3 what we consider to be a very valuable Commonwealth of
 4 Pennsylvania program. Of course additional revenue might
 5 have to be found to do that.

6 Number two (2): If reductions of costs must be pursued,
 7 then simply make these subsidized services available according
 8 to need. Provide them to those with the greatest need, only
 9 to lower income persons and persons seeking medical treatment.
 10 That seems to us a fairer way of limiting these services if
 11 you have to.

12 And finally, number three (3): If restrictions of use
 13 by regulation and by role making, as we are discussing here,
 14 must be the cost cutting method, then work with the statewide
 15 network of Triple "A"'s and the Pennsylvania Department of
 16 Aging, and let's come up with a simple and workable solution,
 17 not one that adds bureaucracy.

18 The task of cutting back needed and popular services is
 19 not easy at the local community level represented by you,
 20 Members of the General Assembly, and by county commissioners.

21 In closing, Commissioner Forrester would like to
 22 suggest that cutbacks of services to senior citizens in our
 23 communities are fundamentally the wrong course. The
 24 demographic trend toward an older and needier older
 25 population, and the service trend away from in-hospital and

1 in-nursing home services, both of those trends suggest that
2 State government should be establishing new services and
3 expanding current services so that senior citizens can
4 remain in their homes and in their communities, and forestall
5 costly institutionalization.

6 Allegheny County in concert with the Commonwealth has
7 recently established a new program, the Long Term Care
8 Assessment and Management Program, which is a demonstration
9 program establishing in-home and in-community help services
10 to delay, or hopefully avoid the costly nursing home services
11 and the devastating relocation of frail elderly citizens who
12 don't wish to be relocated, but wish to have the services in
13 their home.

14 Instead of discussions of the fairest cutback methods,
15 which is what I think we're doing here today, we, in fact,
16 should be considering and enacting legislation to establish
17 the right to community and in-home services for poor, sick,
18 elderly citizens. Commissioner Forrester would be glad at
19 any time, and at any place, to join with the members of the
20 General Assembly in the development of such a proposed statute
21 and set of needed programs and services.

22 Finally, I'd like to thank you. Your response to
23 our prior letters opposing these cutbacks has been very much
24 appreciated. And it is very reassuring that members of the
25 General Assembly have taken an active role in first blocking,

1 and now closely reviewing, and hopefully blocking again,
2 these particular set of regulations. Thank you.

3 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Thank you, Mr. Nelkin. I would hope
4 that you we're going to entertain some questions from the
5 members of the Committee?

6 MR. NELKIN: I'd be glad to, and I'd also like to
7 introduce at the table, Catherine Butchko, who's the Director
8 of the county's Department of Adult Services.

9 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Thank you. I'd also like to
10 acknowledge the presence of Representative Rick Geist, who's
11 joined the Committee, and also Representative Tom Murphy,
12 who's joined the Committee. I guess Tom brought his fan
13 club, too.

14 BY CHAIRMAN LINTON:

15 Q Mr. Nelkin, I'd like to, one, I wanted to clarify
16 one item for the hearing, and this is for everyone in the room
17 but since it was mentioned in your testimony, that's regarding
18 the quarter mile rule. And I wanted to make it clear, one,
19 that that's not a new regulation, that that's one that's been
20 in existence for quite a while. Many have thought that
21 that was something that was newly being proposed, but that is,
22 in fact, the regulation that has been in existence for
23 approximately two (2) years, from my understanding. So I
24 want to make that information known to everyone in the room.

25 In addition, throughout your testimony you made

1 reference to the cuts in medical services. And I was trying
2 to ascertain from my understanding of the proposed regs,
3 where you see regulations that will impact upon the cuts of
4 medical services.

5 A Okay. Again, remember in Allegheny County we use
6 this funding source just for medical services, so that
7 whenever we cut here, and I assume that's what we're talking
8 about is cutting services, we're going to be cutting the
9 availability of transportation to medical services. We
10 pointed out to you the high areas of use, particularly
11 chemotherapy, radiology, and dialysis. Now obviously if a
12 person lives within the quarter mile, or for one of the other
13 stipulations that are in the regulations, isn't entitled to
14 free transportation, they're not going to be able to get at
15 least Commonwealth subsidized transportation to the medical
16 services. We assume that that's going to mean that some
17 people are not going to get those medical services.

18 Q Okay. I would not say that there will be a large
19 magnitude of that under some of the proposed regs because
20 there are some provisions that allow, that justify the uses
21 of the access program for medical services. In addition, the
22 Medicaid Program, I believe, provides a hundred percent
23 (100%) funding for medical trips. That will continue. The
24 Access Program in 203 does not affect that in any way. So I
25 think those opportunities will still be there. We're going

1 to make sure that that happens, I'm quite sure.

2 A To simplify our point, we're simply saying since we
3 only use it for medical services, any cuts mean that
4 transportation for medical services will be less available.

5 Q And when you say "we only use it for medical
6 services," you're referring to?

7 A Allegheny County. Area Agency on Aging.

8 Q The Area Agency on Aging. You don't use it for
9 contracted meals, nutritional trips, or any of those kinds of
10 things?

11 CATHERINE BUTCHKO: As you listened to Mr. Nelkin's
12 testimony you heard that our --

13 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Excuse me. Could you identify
14 yourself, again, please?

15 MS. BUTCHKO: I beg your pardon. My name is Catherine
16 Butchko, I'm the Director of Allegheny County Adult Services,
17 the Area Agency on Aging. Mr. Nelkin's testimony specifically
18 listed those categories of people served by the contract we,
19 the Area Agency via the county, has with the Access
20 Organization. We have modeled our program to serve those
21 people whom we feel are the most needy, the ones at greatest
22 risk. And Bob has emphasized repeatedly the people in the
23 highest category of risk are those receiving chemotherapy,
24 radiation therapy, kidney dialysis. We also serve the people
25 who are going to adult day care, dom care needs, the people

1 in our Protective Services Program, service management, and
2 in general medical services.

3 We have another transportation system operated by the
4 Area Agency on Aging separate from this contract with Access,
5 which is one we refer to as center-based, which does the
6 nutrition trips, takes the people shopping, to and from the
7 centers, and so on. So they are two entirely separate
8 services we offer, and everything that Bob addressed is a
9 system which deals with people with the greatest need.

10 And to echo what he's saying, perhaps not in terms of
11 cuts, but in reference to our concern, anything that happens
12 in changing the way the program is operating now, any
13 regulatory requirement, any new requirement for determining
14 eligibility or determining distances from fixed route stops,
15 anything that requires some kind of paper confirmation or
16 authorization, if it's not going to deny people service,
17 certainly going to hinder the process and our responsiveness
18 to provide them this service.

19 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Thank you. That really clarified
20 it for me. Representative Joe Steighner?

21 REPRESENTATIVE STEIGHNER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

22 Knowing that we have a full agenda I'm just going to
23 make an observation. First, I'd like to thank you for your
24 testimony we had from Commissioner Forrester.

25 (Response from audience that Representative Steighner can not

1 be heard.)

2 Thank you, and thank you Mr. Chairman. Briefly, just
3 an observation. I'd like to thank you for the testimony we
4 have from Commissioner Forrester. Coming from a county
5 outside of Allegheny, the Commissioner's past work and
6 effective work, I might add, on behalf of the senior citizens,
7 not just in Allegheny County, but in western Pennsylvania and
8 the Commonwealth as a whole I think is well documented. But
9 also I'd like to thank you for your specific suggestions on
10 page five (5) that I'm sure this Committee will consider in
11 going back to the Department, as far as some alternatives
12 that the Department itself can look at. And, I'd just, again,
13 simply like to thank you.

14 MR. NELKIN: We appreciate the opportunity.

15 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Representative Lloyd?

16 REPRESENTATIVE LLOYD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

17 BY REPRESENTATIVE LLOYD:

18 Q You indicated that you have a center-based program
19 for transportation. What's the source of funding for that?

20 A That's a State Department of Aging funds, and it's
21 given directly to the county's Department of Adult Services.

22 Q In other words, you use the block grant funds from
23 the lottery for transportation purposes for that center-base.
24 You don't use any 203 funds for that?

25 A That's correct. We use --

1 Q And there's no other agency in Allegheny County
2 which uses 203 funds for any purpose other than the Agency?

3 A Other than what we've described here.

4 Q In other words, everybody in Allegheny County who is
5 benefited by the 203 Program is making a medical trip?

6 A Medical, and then some of those are health related.
7 I think when you're getting into protective services, you're
8 trying to protect the person's safety, or if you're getting
9 into the service management, you're going to be planning for
10 health services. I think we probably need to clarify the
11 role of the Port Authority in this matter.

12 MS. BUTCHKO: The answer to your question is not that
13 everyone who receives 203 subsidized trips is done through the
14 Area Agency. That's not correct. What is correct is that
15 the Access Organization is the agency, or the broker
16 organization which does the specialized transportation for
17 the Port Authority. So they handle, under contract and
18 arrangement for the Port Authority, all of those 203
19 reimbursed services which are not for the sixty-five (65) and
20 older --

21 Q I thought. I don't mean to cut you off, I see what
22 your point is. I thought that that had to be the case. It
23 is not, therefore, necessarily the situation that if funds
24 have to come that they have to come in the program that you
25 administer. They could very well come in more discretionary

1 kinds of travel, which is under the program that PAT
2 administers?

3 A Yes, I suppose that's true.

4 Q The other question I had was you indicate in your
5 testimony that you understand that there are abuses in some
6 counties. What do you consider to be abuses?

7 A I really have to comment on what I have heard, and
8 what I have read, and what I have heard offered as testimony
9 from other areas. The kind of things that I've heard are
10 trips to the airport was one of the biggies, and people who
11 really didn't -- maybe I should back up a bit.

12 I think that the abuse had perhaps resulted from a
13 couple of things. One, that when the 203 Program was put out
14 in the community, there weren't clear guidelines on how the
15 program should be modeled and there weren't any specific
16 restrictions about who or who could not use the programs,
17 except generally people who were sixty-five (65) and older,
18 handicapped, and so on. So I think what happened, perhaps
19 out of fairness, or perhaps out of somebody being clever in
20 other parts of the state, is that instead of doing what we've
21 done in Allegheny County where we decided this was an
22 opportunity to really concentrate the service on people with
23 greatest need, it was made available without too many
24 restrictions so, if somebody was sixty-five (65) or older and
25 could qualify for this service, they could use the service

1 generally for whatever they wanted to be transported. I think
2 that that probably gets translated into abuses.

3 I think the other thing that I heard that I would
4 certainly say is an abuse is that a lot of carriers in other
5 parts of the state have had direct arrangements for
6 reimbursement, and some of their billing, and some of their,
7 if you will, accountability or reporting processes were
8 questionable, how they were counting people, how they were
9 counting trips, how they were billing for trips, and so on.

10 Since we work specifically with Access here, since we
11 work on a contract with fixed figures, and specific
12 determination of who is eligible, we haven't had that kind of
13 situation develop here. So I think part of the problem rests
14 with not clear and specific guidelines for areas to develop
15 the program. And then, perhaps, it rests with some of the
16 areas, the counties, or whoever administered the programs, in
17 deciding very carefully how to use the money and how to
18 develop limitations, and controls, and a good accountability
19 process in order to avoid abuse.

20 Q If cuts are necessary, you think the place to do
21 that is in discretionary kinds of trips. In other words, you
22 would say that we shouldn't be making trips to the restaurant,
23 or to the shopping center reimbursed by stores in that
24 center, we shouldn't be making trips to the airport. If cuts
25 have to come, that's where the cuts should come from?

1 A Generally, I agree with that statement. And I have
2 to echo what Bob said. I fully agree that if we have this
3 kind of public money and public responsibility, we want to
4 look to serve those people with the greatest need, and to try
5 to take the best advantage of the money and the opportunity to
6 meet the high risk people who otherwise would not be able to
7 get services -- and again I have to say medical kinds of
8 services. Otherwise we're going to have a seriously
9 deteriorating -- or an area of seriously deteriorating older
10 persons, who just by the access to this kind of service might
11 prevent serious and greater problems -- serious problems for
12 themselves, and greater problems in responsibility on the
13 public.

14 REPRESENTATIVE LLOYD: Thank you.

15 BY CHAIRMAN LINTON:

16 Q One further question. Sorry you sat down already.
17 I'm just trying to find out, when you said "we in Allegheny
18 County" in terms of Access, but you're referring to the
19 Triple A's. Aren't there other groups outside of Triple
20 A's that utilize two or three shared ride programs through
21 Access?

22 A That's -- When I first got up to answer the
23 question, yes. But we deal with those people sixty-five and
24 older. And when I say "we" I mean the county, the Area Agency
25 on Aging, of which I am the Director; and the "we" that I'm

1 also referencing is represented in this room. We have twenty
2 (20) subcontractors who work with Access and under the
3 contract to coordinate the transportation system. So they
4 are responsible for, first of all, determining the need, and
5 being very responsible in tracking and identifying, and
6 reporting, so that we can be so confident about our system.

7 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Okay.

8 MR. NELKIN: The main point, though, in answer to the
9 question is, what we would like to see is a system that
10 distributes, or makes the transportation available according
11 to the need, the medical need or the low income of the
12 individuals. And we think that we could manage such a
13 program. But what you have here are certain restrictions
14 that will probably impact across-the-board; and that would
15 be our major concern.

16 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Thank you. One question,
17 Representative Murphy?

18 BY REPRESENTATIVE MURPHY:

19 Q Yes. Bob, we heard in Philadelphia in the hearing
20 there --

21 (Interruption from audience that Representative Murphy could
22 not be heard.)

23 Q We heard at the hearing in Philadelphia the real
24 problems with the cost of rides, where the average cost was
25 significantly higher than what it would have cost somebody to

1 hire a cab to take them back and forth. What are you doing
2 here to make sure that's not happening with your arrangements
3 with Access? How are you monitoring the costs? Are you
4 negotiating those beforehand, or what is the arrangement with
5 Access so that you're assuring everybody that the costs are
6 fair for the rides?

7 MS. BUTCHKO: I can only speak specifically to the
8 contract for the services we've been talking about today, and
9 not those outside of the sixty-five plus area. We have --
10 "We" the Area Agency on Aging for the county have a contract
11 with Access which we negotiate with them, so we know what the
12 price is for a trip. And that price is evaluated within each
13 contract year. What we do --

14 Q How do you know what the price is? Do you set it,
15 or does Access come to you and say, "We're going to charge
16 Five dollars (\$5.00) do take somebody from Brighton Heights to
17 Allegheny General Hospital?"

18 A They come to us with certain costs. And it's based
19 on geography, and trips, the ride sharing, the shared ride
20 concept, all of the factors that would go into determining
21 the price. And then we negotiate around that price --

22 Q Okay.

23 A --for what we believe is a fair and equitable price.
24 And I just have one other point, which is that since Access
25 is the broker agency for the Port Authority, they are the

1 ones who interface with the carriers. We don't directly
2 work with, negotiate, or contract with the carriers. The
3 contract with the carriers are between Access and the
4 carriers.

5 Q So -- But the contracts you negotiate with Access,
6 then, are carried over to the carriers?

7 A Yes.

8 Q Do you compare the routes? For example, if I lived
9 on California Avenue in Brighton Heights and called a Yellow
10 Cab and it cost me Five dollars (\$5.00) to get from California
11 Avenue to Allegheny General Hospital in a Yellow Cab; and
12 I'm going to, then, use Access, and I call Access. Do you
13 compare those rates?

14 A We don't compare them because part of the
15 negotiation is that -- in the negotiation with Access is that
16 they would have taken all those factors into account to
17 compare costs --

18 Q Do you generally know, I mean, do you have a sense
19 of is the Access ride cheaper or more expensive than a private
20 Yellow Cab ride?

21 A I think -- Well, I think in some -- I hear people
22 say "cheaper." I have --

23 Q I understand in Philadelphia it's fifty percent
24 (50%) higher.

25 A I don't think it's higher.

1 Q The Access is fifty percent higher, okay?

2 A I think in some cases, in some trips, because of the
3 geography of Allegheny County it could be higher, and it is
4 higher. But generally -- generally, it is not.

5 Q So you're saying it depends on the trip and the
6 number of people riding, and everything like that?

7 A Yes. Well, we have a fixed trip rate which I think
8 is around Twelve dollars (\$12.00) now. That's our trip cost
9 in -- in the contract.

10 Q You're talking about people that operate out of your
11 center, your various centers. What if Mrs. Brown who lives
12 in a high rise for the elderly calls Access and wants --
13 needs -- makes the arrangements themselves through Access.
14 That falls under your contract also?

15 A See, that depends. If that person is part of our
16 system, registered into our Area Agency system, we would make
17 that arrangement. She/He would not normally make that call
18 herself. Now, there might be people who do buy the reduced
19 rate scrip, and that is not part of our system. We are not
20 involved. They can make those independent arrangements
21 themselves with Access.

22 Q Okay. And so, you have no sense of how those rates
23 are, then, established?

24 A We're not informed.

25 Q If Mrs. Brown calls up Access and says, "I need a

1 cab here at such a time to go to the doctors," those rates are
2 established between Access and the carriers?

3 A The carriers, yes.

4 Q So, we'll wait and talk to them. Thank you.

5 CHAIRMAN LINTON: If there are no further questions
6 of Mr. Nelkin, I have none. I'd like to thank you -- both of
7 you for your testimony today, and we will -- this committee
8 will definitely consider many of the points that were made on
9 behalf of the Commissioner Tom Forrester. Thank you very
10 much.

11 I would like to note for the record that I received
12 some testimony from the El Dorado Senior Citizens Center, a
13 petition which I'd like to read just into the record.

14 "Dear Access,
15 Please do not change Access. We depend on them
16 for everything. We are handicapped and cannot
ride public transportation. Access is our life
use and we depend on it. Thank you."

17 And I have a petition signed by members of the center, and
18 we'll commit that for the record.

19 I'd like to call up, is Representative Joe Preston in
20 the audience? I believe Miss Ethel Tracey has a statement
21 which she'd like to read for Representative Tom Petrone.

22 ETHEL TRACEY: Good afternoon. My name is Ethel
23 Tracey, I'm Legislative Aide to State Representative Tom
24 Petrone in the West End. And I have a statement here prepared
25 by Mr. Petrone I'd like to read.

1 I have submitted for consideration, legislation to be
 2 known as House Bill 1627 which will address the procedures to
 3 be followed in any public hearings such as we are having
 4 today, regarding changes in the Access Program. It requires
 5 public hearings such as we're having today and legislative
 6 action for any and all measures affecting the access or 203
 7 program for senior citizens.

8 "I feel that the program as it currently stands has been
 9 very beneficial to these seniors. It has given them a sense
 10 of security and independence. They no longer have to be
 11 concerned about how they will get to the doctor or dentist,
 12 or how they will be getting out to do their grocery shopping.
 13 They no longer have to worry if a grandchild, niece or nephew
 14 will have to take off work to get them there and back.

15 "The program also provides for a free escort to
 16 accompany the senior citizens to medical and dental
 17 appointments. The individual may be perfectly able to travel
 18 by themselves under normal circumstances, but after medical or
 19 dental treatment, may need assistance.

20 "Then, too, what about the individual who may have to
 21 travel outside of the city of Pittsburgh for specialized
 22 treatment or therapy? With the reduction of trip length,
 23 these persons will be forced to once again rely on friends,
 24 neighbors or relatives to make these trips; and the
 25 appointments are not always at a convenient time.

1 "Before making your mind up on the one quarter mile
2 rule, I urge you to take into consideration the topography of
3 the city of Pittsburgh. How many of you have gotten off the
4 bus only to find that your destination is at the top of that
5 hill over there, and when you get there you are completely
6 out of breath? Picture--

7 (Interruption for applause from audience.)

8 Picture the able bodied senior citizen in this situation.
9 They may live less than one quarter mile from a bus stop and
10 their destination may be within that limit, but there is that
11 hill in between. Consider also that some of the stops are in
12 dimly lit locations, isolated. These areas, by their
13 location, instill fear into senior citizens, myself as well.

14 "Like all programs of this type, there are "rough spots"
15 that have been -- Excuse me, let me start over.

16 "Like all programs of this type, there are "rough spots"
17 that have recently surfaced. There may have been abuses of
18 the program. However -- and I speak for myself on this -- our
19 office which is a focal point of senior citizen services and
20 a place where the seniors in the Twenty-seventh Legislative
21 District can come for help with their problems, has yet to
22 have one case of abuse reported."

23 At this point I'd like to break and present to the
24 committee over five hundred (500) signatures which were
25 turned into our office by the various senior citizen high

1 rises, organizations, centers, in the Twenty-seventh
2 Legislative District. Five hundred (500) names, or more,
3 stating:

4 "We, the undersigned senior citizens, respectfully
5 request that the Access 203 Senior Citizen Trans-
6 portation Program remain the same as it is now."

7 We have, through this Program, given our Senior Citizens the
8 ability to maintain their self-sufficiency. Let's not take
9 it away from them. Thank you.

10 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Thank you, Miss Tracey. Before you
11 leave, I just want to thank Miss Tracey for the -- Mrs.
12 Tracey for the testimony on behalf of Representative Tom
13 Petrone.

14 I'd like to acknowledge that Representative Petrone
15 has introduced some legislation related to the Access
16 Program. I'd like to also mention that the Committee will
17 probably, at the conclusion of our hearings, have some
18 additional legislation to be introduced, to deal with some of
19 the problems that we see throughout the Program, as we travel
20 throughout the Commonwealth. So, I just wanted to mention
21 that.

22 And, in addition, Representative Maranek has also
23 introduced legislation related to the Access. So, I imagine
24 there will be a number of bills that the House Transportation
25 Committee will be deliberating over in regards to this
Program.

1 Since there's been some discussion, by our two previous
2 witnesses, related to the quarter-mile rule, I want to -- to
3 mention some of the exemptions that have been mentioned in
4 the proposed regs, related to the quarter-mile rule. And, I
5 think that's something that everyone should hear.

6 These are some of the exemptions, some of the things
7 that will be considered to allow one to use the Access
8 Program, even though they live within a quarter-mile of a
9 fixed route. Inadequate level of fixed route service;
10 personal safety, such as dangerous traffic conditions, high
11 climb areas or icy conditions, such as making walking
12 hazardous; I think some of that would accommodate some of the
13 concerns related to heights and elevations and those kind of
14 things, that would make it difficult for Senior Citizens to
15 have access.

16 Also, extraordinary conditions, such as carrying heavy
17 shopping bags or having a sprained ankle. Other exemptions
18 are Senior Citizens considered functionally handicapped, that
19 a physical or mental impairment prevents a person from using
20 fixed route transit services. The person's trip involves two
21 or more transfers using fixed route transit services.

22 So, I think there are some exemptions that are being
23 proposed within the new regulations that we also need to look
24 at closely, and reassess some of those new exemptions,
25 related to your oppositional concerns about the quarter-mile

1 rule.

2 I'd like to call up our next witness; that's Mr. Harold
3 Jenkins, President of "PAMTA," the Pennsylvania Association
4 of Mass Transit Authorities.

5 (Witness takes stand.)

6 MR. JENKINS: Good afternoon, gentlemen. First
7 of all, I'd like to thank you for giving us the opportunity
8 to appear in front of you today on this issue that, I guess,
9 has taken priority, not only with the Senior Citizens, with
10 the Department of Transportation, but with the Legislators,
11 as well.

12 With me this afternoon is Michael Knoll, he's the Rural
13 Director, which handles our 203 Program in Cambria County;
14 and Mary Jo Mordini, from Beaver County, your neighbor here
15 from Allegheny County, who represents the Beaver County
16 Transit Authority.

17 My name is Harold Jenkins, and I am the General Manager
18 of the Cambria County Transit Authority in Johnstown, and
19 current President of the Pennsylvania Association of
20 Municipal Transit Authorities, or "PAMTA," as it's
21 commonly-known. PAMTA is a state-wide organization, made up
22 of all urban and rural transportation authorities in the
23 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

24 Both my own Authority, as well as the authorities of
25 the Commonwealth, either operate directly or sub-contract

1 shared ride services under Section 203, or have 203 public or
2 private shared ride providers in their service area.

3 PAMTA has been concerned since the inception of 203,
4 that the Program could either become the often missing link
5 in the transportation system for the isolated elderly and
6 handicapped, or a non-coordinated high-cost system, which
7 duplicates other transportation services.

8 To date, I would say both have happened to various
9 degrees, throughout the Commonwealth.

10 Let me give you some typical examples. In my own
11 service area, Cambria County, a non-profit agency is
12 transporting a dozen or so Senior Citizens, each day, from a
13 Senior Citizen apartment building to a Senior Citizen Center,
14 about five hundred (500) feet away. For this, they are
15 reimbursed Four Dollars and Nineteen Cents (\$4.19), per
16 person, per day, of which the Section 203 pays Three Dollars
17 and Seventy-seven Cents (\$3.77). Meanwhile, my Authority
18 operates a bus six (6) times a day, which passes both sites.

19 If the Senior rides the Authority bus, we would receive
20 a Sixty Cent (.60) fare from the Commonwealth's Free Ride
21 Program. Each time -- Each time this trip is made, it costs
22 the Commonwealth Three Dollars and Seventeen Cents (\$3.17),
23 per person, per trip, more than it needs to.

24 In another area of the Commonwealth, a small central
25 Pennsylvania transit authority, has documented the loss of

1 twenty thousand (20,000) riders to the 203 Program. In
2 either case, 203 certainly was not created to do this.

3 Now, let me give you a positive example from my own
4 county. Each day, our Rule Division, known as "CART,"
5 transports rural residents, including many elderly, where
6 they want to go, without restrictions, to Johnstown, Altoona,
7 or other small towns in Cambria County, at fares between One
8 Dollar (\$1.00) and Two Dollars and Fifty Cents (\$2.50). It
9 not only provides door-to-door service at a reasonable fare,
10 but feeds the existing bus systems in Johnstown and Altoona,
11 rather than competing with them.

12 So, the question becomes how to transport the
13 Commonwealth's elderly in a coordinated, low-cost manner,
14 which is truly beneficial to all.

15 Providing door-to-door service which competes directly
16 with fixed route service, both whom receive state financing,
17 certainly is not the answer. The answer simply is
18 coordination, which must be mandated at the state level.

19 Each county or service area should have a single lead
20 agency to coordinate all public and private transportation in
21 their area. This will provide the greater benefit, at the
22 lowest price, to the largest number of citizens.

23 The logical agency to do this are the transportation
24 authorities, which were created just for that purpose.
25 Transportation is only effective when people are moved to and

1 from where they want to go, at a cost which is affordable and
2 reasonable, regardless of who is paying.

3 Simply stated, let transit authorities do what they do
4 best. Section 203 is a Transportation Program. Let those
5 bodies created to provide transit either do it, or sub-
6 contract it in a coordinated manner.

7 Toward this end, the Pennsylvania Association of
8 Municipal Transportation Authorities adopted on September
9 19th, 1985 a position on this Program, and I am pleased to
10 offer it as a part of my testimony.

11 The intent and legislative background of the Section
12 203 Program was to develop shared ride services for Senior
13 Citizens, age sixty-five (65) and older, in areas not
14 served by the Free Transit Program, except for the
15 functionally disabled.

16 The Program was to complement, not compete with, the
17 Free Transit Program. The evidence of this position is
18 contained in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania
19 Department of Transportation, Final Program Guidelines and
20 Procedures, Reduced Fare, Shared Ride Demand Responsive
21 Transportation Program for Senior Citizens, March 5th, 1985.

22 Since 1973, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has
23 sponsored a Free Transit Program for Senior Citizens, under
24 which persons sixty-five (65) years of age or older, may ride
25 free, during off-peak hours, on fixed route public transit

1 services.

2 In a number of areas of the state, this lottery
3 funded program has not benefited those elderly who do not
4 have access to fixed route transportation. As a result, the
5 General Assembly has approved and Governor Thornburgh has
6 signed into law, a new program, which will offer reduced
7 fare, shared ride, demand responsive transportation service
8 for Senior Citizens.

9 The program provides a means of developing and
10 expanding public transit service in rural areas, to which the
11 demand responsive service is particularly well-suited.

12 Through this program, service can be established in
13 areas where no service currently exists, and make service
14 accessible to Senior Citizens who have been unable to utilize
15 available fixed route service.

16 PAMTA, the state association, therefore supports the
17 position that any regulations promulgated should conform and
18 meet the original intent of this legislation.

19 PAMTA supports continued administration by the
20 Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, Bureau of Public
21 Transit and Goods Movement Systems, with lottery funds
22 furnished for administration, monitoring, evaluation and
23 audit of the programs.

24 PAMTA supports the development of a single grant to
25 counties on a county-by-county basis, via the Transportation

1 Authority, by application.

2 Furthermore, PAMTA recognizes that transit authorities
3 were formed under the Municipal Authorities Act, the
4 Pennsylvania Urban Mass Transportation Act, the Second-Class
5 County Port Authority Act, or as an instrument of local
6 government, for the specific purpose of relieving municipal
7 officials from the burden of operating transportation
8 programs.

9 Therefore, the single county grant should first go
10 to the Transportation Authority for coordination.

11 In the absence of a Transportation Authority, or if the
12 existing Municipal Transportation Authority does not choose
13 to act as the coordinating agent, the funding then should be
14 distributed to the county commissioners for disbursal.

15 Recognizing that the intent of the Reduced Fare Program
16 is to provide transportation services to Senior Citizens to
17 whom fixed route service is not available, or accessible,
18 PAMTA supports the enforcement of the quarter-mile rule.
19 That is a person, aged sixty-five (65) years or older, whose
20 origin and destination are within a quarter-mile of a fixed
21 route, which is a free fare eligible under Act 101, will not
22 be eligible for Section 203 service.

23 Special conditions should exist, which permits
24 certified functionally disabled persons to ride shared ride
25 service, within a quarter-mile of a fixed route, and other of

1 the times when fixed route service is not available.

2 Recognizing third-party contracts is an enhancement to
3 coordination of transportation services, and as an efficient
4 method of revenue collection, which provides a clear audit
5 trail.

6 PAMTA supports continuation of third-party contracts,
7 with the Area Agency on Aging, and other PennDot approved
8 non-profit social service agencies, for the non-funded
9 portion of the fare.

10 PAMTA does not support any efforts to impose either
11 income regulations or trip purposes, limitations in
12 relationship to third-party contracts, other than those
13 already established. For instance, the single agency,
14 coordination, quarter-mile rule.

15 PAMTA recognizes the program was developed as a shared
16 ride system; understanding that the nature of all service may
17 necessitate individual trips. Overall system productivity,
18 must be shared ride.

19 Shared ride services should be limited to the days and
20 hours established by the local program coordinator.

21 PAMTA supports a certified audit by an independent,
22 certified Public Accountant, for all providers, yearly.
23 PAMTA recognizes that the use of public funds demands
24 accountability, whether the provider is private or public.

25 PAMTA supports the development of a data bank, as

1 follows: revenue hours and miles, dead-head hours and miles,
2 total passengers, and a breakdown by the types of the
3 passengers. The data bank may be used in determining
4 performance criteria, and assessing the capabilities of the
5 system, to comply with load factor criteria.

6 PAMTA supports efforts to establish reasonable data
7 collection, which clearly provides an audit trail from
8 reservation to service delivery to invoice. Said data
9 collection requirements should not cause undue burden on the
10 transportation provider.

11 If the Transit Authority has an acceptable methodology
12 that provides said information on a sampling basis, PennDot
13 has the authority to accept that methodology.

14 PAMTA supports the requirement that each grantee should
15 develop a budget, consisting of all expenses associated with
16 the administration and operation of the 203 Program.
17 Furthermore, said budget is to be made available for PennDot
18 approval.

19 PAMTA supports a fare structure that is consistent
20 and equitable. Therefore, the fare for a shared ride
21 passenger under the 203 Program, should be less than a non-
22 203 exclusive ride passenger.

23 PAMTA supports the return of the fare
24 reimbursement/payment system to the original seventy-five
25 percent (75%) state, twenty-five percent (25%) local, or

1 individual, as the method of the original -- the method of
2 the original program.

3 Furthermore, upon implementation of the program rules,
4 regulations and guidelines which would eliminate program
5 abuses and establish fiscal and operational controls, and
6 accountability; PAMTA supports funding levels equal to
7 program needs.

8 PAMTA supports that all program rule and regulation
9 changes follow the normal regulatory process, requiring a
10 minimum of ninety-day (90) comment period, thus availing
11 opportunity for review and comment, by all providers.

12 PAMTA supports a local determination policy. That is
13 to say, each system should be allowed to determine what the
14 policy is regarding escoing escorts will be.

15 This, then, is the PAMTA position, developed by urban
16 and rural, large and small transit systems. We believe our
17 approach would be both truly beneficial to the Senior
18 Citizen, and yet, affordable to the Commonwealth.

19 Therefore, let me finish with these four points.
20 Number one (1): coordination, which works; and, it can work.
21 Number two (2): wide-spending of available dollars. Number
22 three (3): quality and safe service for the elderly. Number
23 four(4): commitment to follow the original intent of the
24 program.

25 PAMTA, as well as myself, offer our assistance to the

1 members of the Pennsylvania Legislature, to help do these
2 things.

3 I would be glad to answer any questions, and I thank
4 you for the opportunity to appear in front of you, and give
5 the State Transit Authority's position on this important
6 program.

7 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Thank you, Mr. Jenkins. I'd like
8 to thank you, on behalf of the Committee, for bringing, not
9 only the testimony from PAMTA, with your own input and those
10 that you brought with you, but in addition, the suggestions
11 and position paper that has been provided by PAMTA to give
12 this Committee some more input, as we look into the shared
13 ride program.

14 BY CHAIRMAN LINTON:

15 Q I'd like to start the questioning with, what is
16 your -- What is the history, to your understanding, of the
17 quarter-mile rule?

18 A The history of the quarter-mile rule has been in
19 effect, since day one of the program, and there are -- there
20 are areas where it's abused. There are areas where you
21 cannot have a quarter of a mile rule, for the instances that
22 you pointed out a few short minutes ago. The quarter-mile
23 rule, there has to be exceptions to it. And, it has to be a
24 local decision; it should not be a PennDOT or it should not
25 be a Legislative decision to say who should ride within that

1 quarter of a mile.

2 We know our local areas here in Allegheny County;
3 they know what their areas are, what they consist of, the
4 hills, the valleys, the unsafe places. They should determine
5 who is eligible to ride within that quarter of a mile. And,
6 that should be a local decision, remaining in the local area.

7 Q We're going to have an applause monitor today, to
8 see who gets the most points.

9 I'd like to know, a second question has to do with
10 the loss of ridership to transit authorities. Some of the
11 information that I've reviewed, there's been some concern
12 about that. I would like you to speak on the reimbursement
13 that the transit authorities receive -- you include that in
14 your testimony -- from the Department, for the free transit
15 programs you conduct with Senior Citizens.

16 A Most of the transit authorities, both large and
17 small, rural and urban, across the Commonwealth -- in fact, I
18 would say all of them -- receive free fare lottery monies,
19 under the lottery program. We get reimbursed one hundred
20 percent (100%) for the cost of the fare. Okay, if our fare,
21 for instance, is sixty cents (.60) as it is in Johnstown,
22 under the Free Fare Program, we get reimbursed sixty cents
23 (.60) for every passenger that's carried. Under the 203
24 Program, the fares can fluctuate from anywhere from sixty
25 cents (.60) in our area, okay; they ride for sixty cents

1 (.60) under the 203 Program, and as high as Two-fifty
2 (\$2.50). The Two-fifty (\$2.50) is the highest fare they pay
3 under the Authority's Program. But it can -- It can go as
4 high as Twenty Dollars (\$20.00) for a ride, which sometimes
5 we think is ridiculous, if you can jump in a cab and get a
6 single ride for somewhere for Ten Dollars (\$10.00), and then
7 you're paying Twenty Dollars (\$20.00) through another
8 program. It's not fair to the taxpayers, and to the lottery
9 buyers, of this community.

10 Q You mentioned earlier in your testimony also about
11 having PennDot being, I guess, solely responsible for the
12 monitoring and making sure of the audit trail, and
13 establishing an audit trail, and all those types of
14 procedures.

15 A Nope.

16 Q Many of the providers, private providers and
17 carriers, use PUC rates, or at least they attempt to use PUC
18 rates in regards to charging. I know -- I think in the
19 Access Program here in Allegheny County, that you probably
20 provide some contracting, under the Access Program, with the
21 providers. But, I know in Philadelphia, there are some
22 circumstances where the providers attempt to use their PUC
23 rates to, in fact, charge their fares.

24 A Yes. One of the things that you have to remember,
25 not only this Committee, but the private carriers who are

1 involved in the Program, the 203 Program is a shared ride
2 program; and, a shared ride program means exactly that.
3 There should be a reduction in fares, as they share the ride.
4 The first person that got in could be Two Dollars (\$2.00);
5 the second person that got in, the fare should automatically
6 go down, rather than putting four people in a cab, and
7 charging each one of them Twelve Dollars (\$12.00), and you
8 make Forty-eight Dollars (\$48.00) for that trip. That's nice
9 money.

10 Q Mr. Jenkins is as popular in Allegheny County as he
11 is in Cambria County. I'd like to recognize Representative
12 Ray Geist.

13 BY REPRESENTATIVE GEIST:

14 Q First off, I'd like to say that I agree with
15 the quarter-mile rule. I live in Altoona, Pennsylvania; and
16 if you think you have hills in Pittsburgh, come to Altoona.
17 Do you think you could make any money in Johnstown with a
18 private carrier, if you charged Thirty-three Dollars and
19 Fifty cents (\$33.50) a mile, for a ride?

20 A I would get out of this business and get into
21 private business myself.

22 Q Well, your example that you gave in the first page
23 here, that Three Dollars and Seventeen Cents (\$3.17), per
24 person, per trip, for Five Hundred (500) feet, works out to
25 be Thirty-three Dollars and Fifty Cents (\$33.50), per mile.

1 That's not bad is it?

2 A That's not bad at all.

3 Q Don't you believe that that takes away a lot of
4 good that we could be doing for a lot more people?

5 A We agree with that one hundred percent (100%). If
6 the Authority -- and I'm speaking for the Cambria County
7 Transit Authority, in this particular case, because that
8 happens right in our service area, although it is not in
9 Cambria County, it's in an adjoining county -- that happens.

10 And, if we did not have service there, then fine,
11 we better take care of the elderly and the handicapped. But
12 we do have service that goes right to the front door of that
13 Center, and goes right across the street to the front door of
14 the Senior Citizens Center then.

15 Therefore, the local coordination is where it comes
16 in. If you have somebody coordinating these types of
17 services, you're going to see the program grow, but you're
18 going to see it grow at a smaller scale than what it's
19 grown in the past. It's just gone sky-high.

20 Q The next question is simply this, has your Transit
21 Authority ever investigated the purchasing of jitneys?

22 A Yes.

23 Q To run a program, such as this, so that you could
24 run Sixty Cents (.60) between these buildings, rather than
25 the Three Dollars and Seventy-seven Cents (\$3.77) that

1 somebody else --

2 A Yes, we have, and we are working out a coordination
3 with that individual -- particular agency there that is doing
4 that plan. We are looking, not only at jitneys, smaller
5 buses, vans -- of course, we own a lot of vans ourselves, in
6 Cambria County -- but we're looking at all -- various types
7 of equipment, in order to make the transportation accessible
8 and affordable for everybody.

9 Q I think when you bring examples like this in front
10 of us, it brings back to me -- it hits home. It's very hard.
11 It's like the Ninety-eight Dollar (\$98.00) hammers, and the
12 Hundred and sixty-five Dollar (\$165.00) toilet seats that the
13 Pentagon's buying.

14 A Exactly.

15 Q The only trouble is here, we're cutting in, as far
16 as I'm concerned, into a limited amount of dollars that we
17 have to move a large amount of people. And, I certainly hope
18 that out of this Committee, and out of our Transportation
19 Committee, there will come a program that's very cost-
20 effective, as well as being very people-effective.

21 And, I want to thank you, very much, for using --
22 giving us these examples.

23 A I think with the interaction of this Committee, and
24 with the Department of Transportation, and the Transit
25 Authorities and the private carriers -- we've had a lot of

1 interaction in the last six months, to say the least -- it's
2 been the hottest issue in the Commonwealth.

3 But I think with what you're doing here today, and
4 what the Commonwealth itself has done, to try to address
5 the problems. And, that's really what we're here talking
6 about. We're not talking about cutting back the program;
7 we're not talking about eliminating the rides for the Senior
8 Citizens; that's not the intent of this Committee at all;
9 that's not the intent of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania,
10 and it's certainly not the intent of the Transportation
11 Authorities.

12 What the intent -- and I know that the intent of
13 this Committee, is to put in rules and regulations that we
14 can all live with. It's not a free program; it's not a
15 giveaway program. You're not up here giving away
16 Ninety-eight Dollar (\$98.00) hammers.

17 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Representative Charles Nahill.

18 BY REPRESENTATIVE NAHILL:

19 Q Mr. Jenkins, I'm a little concerned about one of
20 the -- the features that you talk about in here. And, I have
21 no doubt that the smaller authorities, such as the one that
22 you represent, would be perfectly capable of coordinating.

23 I am, however, concerned about a blanket
24 endorsement of all the authorities coordinating.

25 Recently, I tried to get some information from

1 SEPTA and spent the entire day listening to a -- a busy
2 signal. And, it concerns me quite a lot. I don't know the
3 transportation system out here. I don't know whether it's
4 easy to reach them, but if it is like what we have in
5 Philadelphia, I would be most opposed to a SEPTA
6 coordinating, because I have a feeling that most of the
7 Senior Citizens would be sitting at home all day long, trying
8 to call on the telephone to find out if they can go four
9 weeks from now. And, that really scares me. I'd rather have
10 a system like we have at home right now, where all it takes
11 is a thirty-second phone call, and everything's worked out;
12 no busy signals, no delays, no calling days and days and days
13 in advance.

14 Would -- I understand this is a -- this is a state-
15 wide organization, so you can't say except for PAMTA -- or
16 except for SEPTA and PAT, but would you consider it
17 realistically in the final analysis, that maybe all of them
18 are not quite equipped to -- to coordinate as you might be?

19 A Absolutely. And, the direction that you're leading
20 is a good point to follow, because SEPTA is so large and so
21 big. Number one, -- and, this will probably get back to
22 SEPTA --

23 Q I'll tell them.

24 A I don't think SEPTA would even consider doing the
25 Program, unless you paid them Twenty-five Million Dollars

1 (\$25,000,000,000), for it, you know. SEPTA doesn't do
2 anything down there, unless they get up --

3 Q They don't get up in the morning without that kind
4 of money.

5 A -- unless they get the money up front. The
6 coordination is a very important issue. And, we in the
7 smaller counties, along with the larger counties, -- now, we
8 represent all of the transit authorities, including PAT and
9 SEPTA, Erie and all of the others in between; the same as you
10 folks represent two hundred and some lawmakers in Harrisburg,
11 we have our disagreements in the State Association. But when
12 we ended up with a position that was a position, our
13 coordination rule is very clear; if we want it. Okay.
14 SEPTA can turn it down or the Commissioners.

15 And, we're saying the coordination -- the
16 Commissioners could say -- I might not end up as the
17 coordinator in Cambria County. If the Commissioners don't
18 like me the next morning when they get up, it could be
19 somebody else; it could be the Area Agency on Aging. If the
20 Commissioners do not want to appoint SEPTA as the
21 coordinator, they might want to appoint the -- a local social
22 service agency, or whoever is providing service there now.

23 That s our position; that coordination is a must,
24 it is needed, and it should be done, so that the program is
25 under control, totally, but it doesn't have to be done by the

1 transit provider, it could be somebody else. We would prefer
2 to have it, yeah.

3 Q As long as it's not mandated. I think coordination
4 is an absolute essential, I agree with you on that. But I'd
5 rather have it -- somebody that the Seniors can contact and
6 talk to and would be sympathetic and perform the service. I
7 think that's what we're looking for; not to enrich an
8 authority or to make them more powerful. I think we want to
9 move people, and that's the only thing we want to do.

10 A You've got to remember though that, we in the
11 transit business today, we move millions of Senior Citizens
12 every day. Millions of them. Right across the Commonwealth
13 from Altoona to Somerset County to Cambria County, and all
14 the big ones on the outskirts. We move -- We are experienced
15 at moving Senior Citizens, and the handicapped too, the
16 functionally handicapped.

17 Q Thank you.

18 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Harold, you'll get yourself in big
19 trouble. The Chairman of the Committee, myself, of SEPTA,
20 district is Charlie Nahill, so watch yourself.

21 MR. JENKINS: I know.

22 REPRESENTATIVE NAHILL: We don't get these --

23 MR. JENKINS: There's been some talk about that.

24 CHAIRMAN LINTON: We'll talk about that later,
25 Charles. Representative Bill Lloyd.

1 REPRESENTATIVE LLOYD:

2 Q Mr. Jenkins, either I don't read your statement
3 correctly, or the people in this audience aren't
4 understanding it the way I'm reading it. But if I understand
5 your position on the quarter-mile rule, it is that you are in
6 favor of the quarter-mile rule.

7 A Absolutely.

8 Q Therefore, I'm puzzled that everybody is applauding
9 as you say, Senior Citizens are for it. I don't really -- It
10 seems to me that these people are on the other side.

11 A I was going to point that out, but I figured, you
12 know, why kill a good thing.

13 Q All right, now. I'm a little concerned with one of
14 the examples, your leadoff example of abuse which you used,
15 and that is that, you know, in your service area, a non-
16 profit agency -- which is Somerset County -- is transporting
17 a dozen or so Senior Citizens each day from a Senior Citizen
18 apartment building to a Senior Center, about five hundred
19 (500) feet away, ho, ho, ho, ho, ho; and for this, they're
20 reimbursed Four Dollars and Nineteen Cents (\$4.19), for which
21 Section 203 pays Three Seventy-seven (\$3.77); and you can
22 provide this for Sixty Cents (.60).

23 Now, that's a big chuckle for everybody, and that
24 tends to make a record that you can put all across the state
25 and show what terrible abuses there are in the Program.

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1 I understand, Mr. Jenkins, that about fifty (50) to
2 sixty (60%) percent of the people in that Senior Citizen
3 Center -- or rather where they live -- are certified as being
4 functionally disabled.

5 A Cambria County Transit Authority is one hundred
6 (100%) percent accessible to the handicapped people. One
7 hundred (100%) percent. We are the only Transit Authority in
8 the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania that has one hundred (100%)
9 percent accessibility.

10 Q All right. I guess we'll have a chance to ask
11 people in Somerset County about that.

12 It's my understanding that you are not able to
13 provide service for all of those people, and that therefore,
14 those vans, whether they haul a hundred (100%) percent of the
15 people or whether they don't, are going to have to operate
16 every day anyway.

17 How long does it take to get that hundred feet --
18 that five hundred (500) feet if they ride on your bus?

19 A About five (5) minutes -- three (3) minutes.

20 Q See, that's also not what I just heard. What I was
21 told was it would take ten (10) or fifteen (15) minutes.

22 A We just recently wrote that --

23 Q I guess what we got here is a little bit of a
24 difference of opinion on facts, and I guess we'll find out --
25 we'll find out later today. But it -- it bothers me that you

1 come in here, and when we have all kinds of port authorities
2 across the state, that you take one out of your system to
3 rap a rural area, where at least your version of the facts
4 doesn't square with the version of facts that I'm getting
5 from the Somerset County officials.

6 Now, I take great offense to that.

7 In addition to that, what I see here, from your
8 whole proposal, is that you want to save money by taking
9 transportation service away from people in my County.

10 A Absolutely not.

11 Q And as you say, where you want to save money, Mr.
12 Jenkins, because you want to go back tonight and handrule.
13 And, if we go back tonight and handrule, and my County is
14 going to continue to pick-up a hundred (100%) percent
15 reimbursement for essential services to Senior Citizens, that
16 means they're going to have less money with which to provide
17 additional service, because -- or some other kind of Senior
18 Citizen service, because they're using block grant money to
19 do that, because now, you're requiring them to go back to
20 paying twenty-five (25%) percent again.

21 Now, I don't understand why we are so concerned
22 about making sure that all the transit authorities in this
23 Commonwealth are taken care of, when people in my County --
24 people in my County, in some of the rural areas, don't have
25 access to any mass transit system at all. And, that just

1 bothers me. It bothers me that you come in here and take
2 that position coming from a rural area. And, it bothers me
3 that we are -- that we are taking a program and we're worried
4 and make sure that everybody in all the urban areas can get a
5 hundred (100%) percent transportation, when in my County,
6 many, many, many of the people, because of the lack of money
7 and the low-level of ridership that would come from that
8 area, are completely isolated, and don't have anything at
9 all. And, what I see, is you're proposing something on
10 behalf of the Mass Transit Authority, that would make your
11 situation go backwards. And, I see that as something that I
12 am -- And, I am very, very sorry that someone coming from
13 rural Pennsylvania, who ought to be aware of those kinds of
14 problems, at taking that position.

15 A We are completely aware of the problems, sir. And,
16 I would like to point out, that the seventy-five (75) -
17 twenty-five (25) rule that we're talking about that was
18 originally in the program, is, can be, and will be paid by a
19 third-party. At a prior -- Prior to --

20 Q Which is being paid out of --

21 A Let me finish. I let you finish, sir.

22 Q -- a block - grant fund to Somerset County Area
23 Agency on Aging.

24 A When the program was originally started, the 203
25 Program, they had a maintenance of effort in there that shows

1 that the programs that you're going to subsidize and the
2 Senior Citizens programs that you're going to subsidize, they
3 had to continue to spend that same amount of money on the
4 Senior Citizen programs. That maintenance of effort --
5 maintenance of level effort, is no longer in there.

6 And, to get back to Somerset County, sir --

7 Q We are spending more money on Senior Citizen
8 programs, I am sure, than we were in Section 203 to start.
9 There's no question about that.

10 A The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is spending more
11 money on Senior Citizen programs, yes.

12 Q That's right, and I --

13 A Through the lottery program. Yeah. Let me go back
14 when you say there is no mass transportation in Somerset
15 County, --

16 Q Other than up in the Wimber area, can you tell me
17 where there is any?

18 A Wimber, Rumble, Paint Township, Conemaugh Township
19 --

20 Q That's temporary. That's not --

21 A Conemaugh Township.

22 Q Now?

23 A Conemaugh Township is in Somerset County, sir, and
24 we provide service there, about twenty (20) trips a day.

25 Q What service do you provide in Central City? What

1 service do you provide in Module? What service do you
2 provide in Somerset? What service do you provide in
3 Salsberry or Myersdale?

4 A I would be glad to provide the service, and to run
5 a public transit system there, if somebody would help to
6 assist to pay for it; being, the County Commissioners of
7 Somerset County. We have approached them a dozen times; we
8 have petitions from residents throughout your district
9 requesting transportation from us, and we can't go into your
10 County, unless somebody pays the local share; and, we have
11 been consistently turned down by the Somerset County
12 Commissioners for the local share.

13 Q That's because we can't afford your rates. Thank
14 you.

15 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Representative Murphy.

16 REPRESENTATIVE MURPHY:

17 Q Mr. Jenkins, I considered it an inaccuracy -- I
18 guess, an inconsistency in your testimony, that I wanted to
19 clear up. Still, eluded to it. In your statement, you
20 indicated your strong support of the quarter-mile rule, but
21 in your discussion, you said that you were for local control
22 of the program. I don't know how you reconcile these two.

23 A With exceptions, and you'll -- the regulations are
24 out now, and the regulations have the exceptions in it. And,
25 in our testimony, we say that there will be exceptions to the

1 quarter-mile rule. There has to be.

2 Q I can understand, but it seems to me, with the
3 quarter-mile rule, you eliminate a great deal of local
4 control and discretion, in providing transportation. You
5 eliminate the ability really to deal with geography, to a
6 large part, or other kinds of trips. I don't know how you
7 reconcile the two.

8 A You -- When you have the coordinated service, you
9 can reconcile the two. Our -- Our -- Our comment to the
10 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, when we were discussing the
11 quarter-mile rule, is that it would have to be local
12 decisions, made by the local coordinating agency, and the
13 only time that the Commonwealth would get involved in it, is
14 if there was a formal protest filed, such as there is filed
15 under the PUC Regulations.

16 Q But, Mr. Jenkins, I think you know well enough, if
17 you give bureaucracy an inch, they're going to take a mile.
18 And, I don't understand how -- you're an experienced transit
19 operator -- how you expect PennDoT to try to operate any kind
20 of regulation flexibly. And, I think that is absolutely
21 impossible for a bureaucracy, like PennDoT, to do.

22 And, so, for your organization, the state-wide, to
23 take a position, which is in complete contradiction to what
24 you've just said you supported, from my point of view. I
25 would think that --

1 A You have to -- Go ahead.

2 Q -- you say to PennDOT, "we support strongly these
3 regulations", and at the same time you say, "we expect you to
4 operate them flexibly."

5 A No.

6 Q That's a contradiction.

7 A PennDOT cannot -- PennDOT cannot and would never be
8 able to monitor the quarter-mile rule. It's impossible.
9 They don't have enough people to do that.

10 Q Right.

11 A That would have to be the local coordinating
12 agency, whoever that agency might be, would have to do the
13 coordinating, and watch the quarter-mile rule, for the
14 flagrant violations.

15 Q But we're in this mess that we're in today, because
16 that law that was on the books, and people decided to enforce
17 it. And, I would submit to you, that you ought to take --
18 you ought to go back to the Transit Authority and take the
19 position that you support local control of this Program, with
20 a minimum of state regulations. That way it's a lot safer.

21 CHAIRMAN LINTON: That is one of the reasons we have
22 public hearings, because there is a large version, point of
23 view, on this issue. And, we are going to have to come up
24 with a consensus that will meet everybody's needs.

25 One, I think, within the quarter-mile rule, there

1 are, as I said, in the regulations, some exemptions. My
2 understanding, my interpretation of Mr. Jenkins' testimony,
3 evidently, was different than my colleagues, in that, there
4 are exemptions. And, when you said "local control," what you
5 have here in Allegheny County, through the Access Program,
6 is, in fact, local control. Control which is coordinated,
7 where, in fact, the local coordinating agency would, in
8 fact, be able to legitimize those exemptions for their
9 neighborhood?

10 If that was, in fact, the case throughout the
11 Commonwealth, I would suspect that maybe the problems that we
12 have in abuse, would not be in existence today.

13 I think if the program exemption, similar to what
14 we're talking about, local coordination, first given the
15 option -- the option is given to the transit authority. It
16 does not mean that the transit authority would, in fact,
17 have to be the local coordinator. It could, in fact, be some
18 other agency, within that local area. And, then, within the
19 local coordination, the concerns that Charlie has, in regards
20 to -- it would not be called a SEPTA, per se, but they would
21 still be able to operate with the individual providers that
22 they operate with now. Except that the operation would be
23 brokered by the local coordinating establishing regulations
24 and practices.

25 Any further questions? Scott Casper, Executive

1 Director of House Transportation Committee.

2 BY MR. CASPER:

3 Q Mr. Jenkins, the first sentence on Page 2, you
4 mentioned that "small central Pennsylvania transit authority
5 has documented the loss of twenty thousand (20,000) riders to
6 the 203 Program." Is that Red Rose? Who is that?

7 A Yes, it is.

8 Q Red Rose?

9 A Yeah, I think you'll hear that testimony at your
10 next hearing.

11 Q Yes. We plan to have Red Rose people in to testify
12 to that. At the Philadelphia public hearing we had --
13 several people testifying from Senior Citizen Centers, saying
14 that they had statistics that showed that SEPTA, on the other
15 hand, had not been losing actual net Senior Citizen numbers
16 to the 203 Program, but had been gaining as well.

17 And, what they pointed out to us, was that there is
18 such an untapped market for Senior Citizen access. In other
19 words, for so long Senior Citizens have been shut in, and
20 now, the doors have been opening up to them, that there's
21 enough market out there for the transit authority, as well
22 as 203 providers.

23 Would you agree to that or disagree? Is that a mixed
24 bag in PAMTA; some of the authorities make out, some
25 authorities lose?

1 A Yes, that is true. And, some of the smaller
2 authorities -- Altoona, for instance, I just talked with them
3 two days ago, and their Senior Citizen ridership is down, and
4 they don't understand why. And, I -- they can't blame it on
5 the 203 Program, but their Senior Citizen ridership is down.

6 In Cambria County, we run the 203 Program, and we
7 coordinate the 203 Program. Our Senior Citizen has been
8 climbing for the last sixteen (16) months. And, not just the
9 203 Program, but the Free Fare Program, too, has been
10 climbing and escalating. Why, we don't know, because we're
11 not doing anything special to get them on the bus.

12 In some areas, it has gone down; in other areas,
13 it's going up. Those individual areas that say they are
14 losing, and losing it by the 203, are going to have to
15 testify to that themselves, you know. I really can't speak
16 for them. And, they're going to have to point it, and say
17 where it's coming from.

18 Q Internally, in PAMTA, with your discussion with
19 your member authorities, those on the loser's side of the
20 ledger, are they complaining that they're losing, simply
21 because of greater competition, if you will, or are they
22 concerned about their loses that are coming with provider
23 abuse?

24 A Provider abuse. Basically, provider abuse, where
25 they're running down the same street, picking up the

1 passengers before the bus gets there.

2 Q In other words, it isn't just a question of this
3 competition that people provide -- working within the
4 framework, within the proper guidelines, doing the right
5 thing. And, that the good guys out there, if you will -- it's
6 been a problem -- if you meant it the right way, you're
7 saying it's the bad guys who are pulling -- doing things they
8 shouldn't be doing, and pulling away that -- the loads of the
9 public --

10 A Exactly, and that's why we're faced with
11 regulations today.

12 Q Okay. Thank you.

13 A Um-hmm.

14 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Harold, I'd like to -- if there are
15 no further questions, I'd like to thank you for your
16 testimony.

17 We will consider the PAMTA proposal, in with the
18 others, in terms of trying to come up with a consensus, to
19 try to make sure we have Access Programs, such as the one in
20 Allegheny County, but a transit program that meets the needs
21 of the Seniors in this Commonwealth. Thank you.

22 MR. JENKINS: I'd like to thank you, Mr.
23 Representative, and thank all the Representatives on the
24 Board, for hearing us out. Thank you.

25 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Thank you very much. We're going

1 -- I would like to call, as our next witness, Commissioner
2 Barbara Hafer, Allegheny County Commissioner.

3
4 Thank you. In the -- Trying to continue operating in
5 some time frame, we'd like to continue with the hearings.

6 Mrs. Hafer, thank you very much for coming to appear
7 before the Committee today, and we're now prepared for your
8 testimony.

9 COMMISSIONER HAFER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and my
10 personal thanks to the House Transportation Committee for
11 scheduling this hearing and giving all interested parties an
12 opportunity to speak out.

13 I know many Senior Citizens of Pennsylvania share
14 my feelings of appreciation to you for bringing this vital
15 issue of shared rides service to center stage.

16 All of us concerned with serving our aging
17 population, were most relieved in early August, when the
18 Pennsylvania Department of Transportation responded to
19 community wishes, and suspended directives which would have
20 placed unreasonable restrictions on the Section 203 Shared
21 Ride Program.

22 It is my understanding that the new rules are in
23 suspension, pending further investigation and communication
24 with affected persons and representatives of interested
25 agencies and programs.

1 The well-being of thousands of older persons across the
2 state is at stake. I am pleased that the third-party
3 reimbursement has remained part of the Program. However,
4 presently, only five (5) percent of Allegheny County shared
5 ridership are over the proposed income guidelines for the
6 third-party reimbursement. My fear is that we are in danger
7 of creating a two-tiered system.

8 In Allegheny County alone, as many as fifty
9 thousand (50,000) Senior residents would have been adversely
10 impacted, in one way or another, by the almost imposed new
11 directives.

12 In view of the public outcry that occurred, it is
13 now imperative that any and all change proposed for 203
14 Program be given priority attention through public discussion
15 and thorough examination of the pros and cons. This can best
16 be accomplished, I'm convinced, through the orderly
17 evaluation procedures utilized by the Independent Regulatory
18 Review Commission; the "IRRC."

19 I urge the Transportation Committee to take
20 appropriate steps to assure that the shared ride program be
21 subjected to microscopic public scrutiny through the IRRC
22 review process. That is essential, particularly if PennDot
23 has any idea of reinstituting the proposed directives.

24 My own analysis and conversations with dozens of
25 knowledgeable persons, has convinced me that those rules

1 were, for the most part, extremely -- extremely complex and
2 unrealistic. And, it seems to me, administratively
3 unworkable and unenforceable.

4 At the very least, the cost of implementing and
5 administering regulations would be prohibitive, and
6 certainly counter to PennDOT's objective of obtaining cost-
7 efficiency in such programs.

8 One directive, for example, would disqualify
9 persons, sixty-five (65) and older, from a fare discount, if
10 there was a bus stop within a quarter of a mile of their
11 home, or their destination. It's this kind of arbitrary
12 ruling that could result in administrative chaos.

13 The steep hills here in Allegheny County would
14 prohibit many frail elderly from using the fixed route public
15 transportation. Although conditions have now been outlined
16 which may exempt some Senior Citizens from the quarter-mile
17 rule, they place another level of bureaucracy on the program
18 that has a history of administrative problems.

19 The proposed regulations, as revised, will institute
20 a change for Senior Citizen escorts. This will impede the
21 Allegheny County program that presently caters to the frail
22 elderly, who need assistance to and from chemotherapy, kidney
23 dialysis, and doctor office visits.

24 The state is implementing a new program, "LAMP",
25 which -- whose purpose is to defer frail elderly from

1 placement in nursing homes, allowing them to remain in the
2 community. With more frail elderly remaining in the
3 community, the need for Senior Citizen escorts will be
4 greater than ever before.

5 I'm aware that the 203 Program has been exploited
6 to some extent by commercial interest in other parts of the
7 Commonwealth, and used by persons who can afford to pay for
8 the transportation out of their own pocket. But as a
9 Pittsburgh Press editorial has stated, "why not zero in on
10 and resolve the identifiable problem, rather than undercut a
11 service that provides easy mobility to hundreds of thousands
12 of elderly persons."

13 That's -- Let's not penalize our older residents
14 for abuse committed by a few service providers.

15 Regulating a complex state-wide program is no easy
16 job, but we must try to establish the clearest, simplest
17 rules possible. And, we are to avoid discouraging the very
18 people the program is intended to serve.

19 I believe the key to this is to concentrate on the
20 frail elderly, who are in most need, and to provide them with
21 transportation for medical purposes and nutrition services.

22 It is my earnest hope that this Committee will use
23 its influence to prevent deterioration, and the undermining
24 of what has been described by many as one of the best
25 programs ever conceived, for the benefit of older residents

1 of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

2 Again, my thanks to Chairman Hutchinson, and all
3 members of this Committee, for giving me the time to express
4 my views on behalf of Allegheny County and our aging
5 citizens.

6 I would also like to introduce Mr. Tom O'Shea, who
7 is Deputy Director of our Area Agency on Aging. Thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Thank you very much, Commissioner,
9 for your testimony. I would like to see if any member of the
10 Committee may have a question.

11 (No response.)

12 A Easy, thank you.

13 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Well, you got through clean here.
14 Thank you very much.

15 Our next witness is the Honorable William Hawkins,
16 Deputy Secretary, Department of Aging.

17 DEPUTY SECRETARY HAWKINS: Good afternoon, Mr.
18 Chairman; ladies and gentlemen of the House Transportation
19 Committee. I am Bill Hawkins, Deputy Secretary of
20 Pennsylvania Department of Aging.

21 I want to thank you for the opportunity to discuss
22 with you the shared ride program, which has been of
23 tremendous benefit to our Senior Citizens. The Department
24 has been working closely with the Pennsylvania Department of
25 Transportation to address the shared ride program. We are

1 devoted to developing a mutually agreeable approach to this
2 overwhelmingly popular program for Senior Citizens. It is
3 imperative that we reach accord with this program as promptly
4 as possible, to provide the best benefits to the Senior
5 Citizens of the Commonwealth, by preserving services for
6 Senior Citizens, by preventing abuses by providers, and by
7 protecting lottery resources for Senior Citizen programs.

8 As you are most aware, transportation for Senior
9 Citizens, remains among the highest priorities for the
10 Department of Aging. In our travels, throughout the
11 Commonwealth, we often meet Senior Citizens who tell us how
12 important transportation services are to them. Many directly
13 mention the shared ride service available to them, through
14 the lottery fund, as being truly necessary.

15 Transportation for the elderly is indeed a key link
16 between the individual and society. It provides a vital
17 means to keep older persons active in the community.
18 Transportation is a tremendous asset in any attempt to keep
19 Senior Citizens from withdrawing from the mainstream of
20 society, and becoming isolated.

21 The benefits of the shared ride program for Senior
22 Citizens are numerous. Today, more Senior Citizens are able
23 to attend Senior Centers, socialize and participate in
24 recreational activities; Senior Citizens have more
25 flexibility in traveling to medical facilities; they can do

1 so on a more frequent basis.

2 In many cases, Seniors can receive the medical
3 attention they need, as frequently as necessary, instead of
4 receiving attention when transportation is available.

5 Seniors benefit from the transportation program in
6 other ways as well. They can obtain access to various
7 locations, such as grocery stores, places where they can
8 volunteer their time, and work locations. The shared ride
9 program provides a large degree of mobility to those Senior
10 Citizens who are transportation dependent.

11 Transportation aids in improving the overall
12 quality of life experienced by the elderly of the
13 Commonwealth. With the quality of life interests in mind, I,
14 as the Deputy Secretary of the Department of Aging, am most
15 concerned about developing a means of providing essential
16 transportation services to those Senior Citizens in need.

17 Efforts to make as many services available as
18 possible, must also be tempered with the program which -- the
19 design of the program, which is manageable and permits costs
20 to be maintained within affordable limits.

21 To maintain the balance between providing an
22 adequate level of service to Seniors, while staying within
23 the funding limits of the lottery, is a major objective of
24 the Thornburgh administration. In order to maintain this
25 balance, the administration has attempted to implement

1 several initiatives, which would permit acceptable management
2 controls. These controls are necessary to address certain
3 excesses which have occurred in the shared ride program.

4 For example, there are flat fixed rate fares for
5 van service provided through the shared ride program. These
6 fares are applied to each person who rides. If one person
7 rides a van, or if the van is completely occupied, no
8 consideration is given to the distance travelled by the
9 passengers. These individual fares often exceed Ten Dollars
10 (\$10.00) per person. If ten (10) passengers boarded a van at
11 a Senior Citizen apartment house, and were transported to a
12 common destination, the vehicle would earn One Hundred Seven
13 Dollars and Eighty Cents (\$107.80) for that single trip.
14 This, of course, assumes a flat rate fare of Ten Dollars and
15 Seventy-eight Cents (\$10.78), per person.

16 If it took an hour to provide the service, the
17 vehicle earned One Hundred and Seven Dollars and Eighty Cents
18 (\$107.80), per hour, for a one vehicle trip. The Section 203
19 Program would pay Ninety-seven Dollars (\$97.00) of that cost,
20 with the Senior Citizens paying the remaining Ten Dollars
21 (\$10.00). This example illustrates several concerns which
22 the administration is attempting to address.

23 Initially, a flat rate fare for a shared ride seems
24 to be contrary to the very intention of the program. Logic
25 would assume that fares would be cheaper, depending upon the

1 number of passengers sharing the ride. The flat rate fare
2 does not take this into consideration.

3 Additionally, no consideration is given to the
4 distance traveled. It would seem that the distance should be
5 a key-factor in determining the cost of a ride.

6 Shared ride service should be cheaper than
7 exclusive ride taxi service, which, as I indicated, is the
8 intent of the shared ride program. However, in many
9 instances, this has proven not to be the case. Exclusive
10 ride taxi cab fares have been known to be lower than shared
11 ride fares, even in the same geographic area. A fare of Ten
12 Dollars (\$10.00) for a shared ride, in some cases, would seem
13 to be high. This is particularly true when the cost for
14 exclusive ride taxi cab service could be obtained for less
15 than Ten Dollars (\$10.00).

16 I provide these examples to illustrate aspects of
17 the program where there appears to be more lottery funds
18 being used than may be necessary.

19 These situations do not provide Senior Citizens
20 with the most economical service possible. In effect,
21 Seniors lose the full benefit of this lottery funded program,
22 because the high cost of service limits the amount of service
23 which can be purchased.

24 In addition, the spiraling costs of the shared ride
25 program threatens it and other lottery funded programs, as

1 well.

2 The administration is attempting to improve the
3 management of this program, which will result in improvements
4 to the service which Senior Citizens receive. An effort
5 will be made to insure that the concept of economical shared
6 rides is maintained.

7 The logic of the shared ride concept will also be
8 addressed as part of the new program regulations.

9 An emphasis will be placed on insuring that those
10 Senior Citizens most in need will receive service for
11 essential trips. Transportation to medical facilities, to
12 and from congregate meal sites, trip to volunteer or
13 employment locations, as well as shopping trips, may be made
14 free to those persons meeting income limits of less than
15 Fifteen Thousand (\$15,000.00) per year, for a married
16 couple, or Twelve Thousand (\$12,000.00), a year, for an
17 individual.

18 I emphasize, however, every Senior Citizen,
19 regardless of income, may be eligible for the shared ride
20 program. In some cases, the Senior Citizens not eligible
21 under the essential trips that I just described, may still be
22 eligible for a ninety (90%) percent lottery sponsored trip,
23 regardless of income.

24 The method of determining income would be through
25 self-certification by the Senior Citizen. If a person meets

1 the income limits, the local Area Agency on Aging will have
2 the option of paying the reduced fare for that person, for
3 those trips -- or for those trip purposes previously
4 mentioned. In this manner, those most in need will be
5 accommodated.

6 This income verification method will result in
7 minimal additional work for Area Agencies on Aging. Since all
8 Seniors need to actually document their age, income
9 verification would only be one additional question to ask,
10 when their age is documented.

11 I'd like to restate that an important aspect of the
12 program is that no person, age sixty-five (65) or older,
13 will be refused service, based on their income.

14 I should note also, that the income verification is
15 the same as the requirements for other lottery funded
16 programs. The administration believes that this course of
17 action will accomplish the objectives of insuring an adequate
18 level of transportation services to the elderly, while
19 maintaining the fiscal integrity of the lottery fund.

20 The Department has and will continue to work
21 closely with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation,
22 so that these objectives are fully achieved.

23 Again, I wish to thank the Committee for the
24 opportunity to address you on this very important matter.

25 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Thank you, Deputy Secretary

1 Hawkins. I'd like to start the round of questioning.

2 BY CHAIRMAN LINTON:

3 Q Could you give me some idea, and I guess a
4 guesstimate, if you don't have the exact figures, on what
5 percentage of Senior Citizens that are serviced by the triple
6 "A", that would exceed the income limits that the Department
7 is proposing in this regulation?

8 A Mr. Chairman, school is still out on state-wide
9 data. That has just not been accumulated and/or assimilated,
10 at this time. However, there has been a relatively
11 unscientific, nonetheless verifiable sample, taken in
12 southwestern Pennsylvania, that suggests at the outside,
13 only five (5%) percent of those being served are outside or
14 higher than the income limits I've suggested, and the
15 proposed regs would suggest.

16 Q Okay. Then under the proposed regs, as
17 Commissioner Hafer has indicated, we would be creating a two-
18 tier program within the triple "A", and those Senior Citizens
19 who are in that five (5%) percent or whatever that you're
20 estimating, that do not meet the guidelines, yet are still
21 being serviced by the same triple "A"'s, and eligible for
22 service through those same programs, under the old Adult Act.
23 Is that correct?

24 A I think you're right, yes.

25 Q Okay. You indicated earlier in your testimony that

1 -- Could we have a little sense of quiet, please. You
2 indicated earlier in your testimony that, you're not trying
3 -- you're not attempting to cut-off service to any Senior
4 Citizens, and that all Senior Citizens would have access to
5 transportation services. However, isn't it true that only
6 those who meet the income guidelines would have access to
7 reimbursement by the triple "A" centers?

8 A That's correct.

9 Q I just wanted to make sure, because they're seemed to
10 be some misunderstanding among some members of the Committee,
11 as to whether that was contradictory or not.

12 A That's correct.

13 Q So, I wanted to clarify that.

14 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Any other members of the Committee
15 have questions for Secretary Hawkins?

16 REPRESENTATIVE NAHILL: Yes.

17 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Representative Nahill.

18 BY REPRESENTATIVE NAHILL:

19 Q Bill, while you were planning and discussing this
20 program, and while you're looking at it as it progresses,
21 were you surprised at the -- at the large increase in
22 ridership over the years, or is this something that -- that
23 your Department projected?

24 A I think it was relatively easily predictable, had we
25 looked at some of the things that occurred over the past two

1 (2) years.

2 Although, Secretary Jenkins and I are relatively
3 new on the scene, there is clear evidence that over the past
4 two (2) years, the Department of Aging has been encouraging
5 triple "A"'s and transportation providers to find -- identify
6 the market for this shared ride program that's out there.
7 And, what actually happened is, a whole new group of people
8 became aware of the shared ride program, and began accessing
9 it. Thus, giving rides to the increased ridership, and
10 obviously, the increased costs.

11 Q What do you see over the next two (2) to three (3)
12 or five (5) years, as far as ridership? Have we -- Have we
13 reached most of the people that are eligible and so that
14 they are aware of it, or are we going to have a continuing
15 explosion over the next three (3) to five (5) years?

16 A Well, without having studied real hard data, my gut
17 feeling is, it can nothing but increase. As Barbara Hafer
18 mentioned a few minutes ago, if we have any success at all
19 with the long-term tier assessment management program, the
20 "LAMP" Program, that we're operating now in the Department of
21 Aging, our intention is to divert folks who normally would
22 go to nursing homes, and probably not access the shared ride
23 transportation program, to stay in their homes; be cared for
24 in the community. And, that alone, should drive the
25 ridership, or certainly the potential for ridership, upward.

1 Q What do you see as far as funding over the next
2 three (3) to five (5) years? Do you see us keeping up with
3 this demand, as it increases as rapidly as it's been?

4 A Charlie -- Representative Nahill, I'm on the wrong
5 side of the table to be answering that question. You folks
6 determine funding levels. You mean --

7 Q Well, I'm talking about strictly -- I'm talking
8 about strictly the money available through the lottery. What
9 do you see is available through the lottery, that we can
10 allocate? Do you see sufficient monies there?

11 A As some of you know, prior to my assuming the
12 position of Deputy Secretary of Aging, I was Deputy Secretary
13 of Revenue. And, as part of my responsibilities, we --
14 Revenue, administered the lottery funds. Secretary Jim
15 Shiner, in February or March of this year, at budget
16 hearings, suggested that new programs should be looked at
17 very closely, because his data and budget analysts in the
18 Department of Revenue were projecting that the lottery
19 surplus that we know of as surplus, excess money, is likely
20 to be gone, dried up by the year 1991.

21 Notice I hesitated after I said that. Nobody
22 believes it, but I'm telling you, the figures are real. Who
23 was it, Mr. Chairman, who said, "the punishment for the
24 bearer of bad news is to," -- Secretary Shiner said this.

25 Q Not you?

1 A No. No, we all say it, who see the lottery surplus
2 figures.

3 Q Thank you, Bill.

4 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Mr. Deputy Secretary, I'd like to
5 clarify one thing. The members on this side of the table,
6 do not control the spending of the lottery fund, and if we
7 in fact, did I would suspect that we would not be in the
8 problem we're in now. But it was, in fact, the
9 administration, through executive authorization, that put the
10 cap on the amount of money that was spent for this program.
11 So, we have no control over that. That's one of the things
12 that we might suggest that we look into.

13 A But you do have control over programs that are
14 funded -- to be funded by the lottery.

15

16 Q Didn't Governor Thornburgh sign the last piece of
17 legislation which we enacted creating the program?

18 A Yes.

19 Q Don't I see him on television constantly talking about
20 Senior Citizen programs?

21 A Most especially the PACE Program, the Pharmaceutical
22 Assistance --

23 Q He signed that too, didn't he?

24 A Yeah.

25 Q That's what I thought. Thank you.

1 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Deputy Secretary, I'd like to ask
2 a question.

3 BY CHAIRMAN LINTON:

4 Q Is there a feeling among the Department of Aging
5 and the Department of Transportation and the PUC, since
6 you've all been involved in these discussions around the
7 regs, that imposing income guidelines would result in a
8 savings of dollars? And, if so, could you explain why? Or
9 how?

10 A Yes. I'm going to be slow to do this, but my sense
11 of it is, with the imposition of income guidelines, the focus
12 will be necessarily on getting the service to those most in
13 need. An income requirement accomplishes that.

14 Q You're suggesting that Senior Citizens would ride
15 less, because they would have to pick-up the additional
16 cost, and therefore, that would be a reduction in the
17 expense of the program? Those Senior Citizens who will go
18 somewhere, normally because the triple "A" had been picking
19 up the third-party payment, would not now travel, if they
20 had to pay that money out of their own limited income?

21 A I don't know. I would be reluctant to debate that
22 issue on the point that you're raising.

23 What I would suggest, however, is that the proposed
24 regulations are an attempt to focus services, thus
25 expenditures from that pot of money, on those most in need.

1 If you need the service to get to work, it's a hundred (100%)
2 percent funded program. Some of which, ten (10%) percent of
3 some number "X", will come out of the triple "A"'s block
4 grant. Still out of the lottery fund, however.

5 Q But you -- But when you're saying proposing
6 limitations, you're only talking about the amount that's
7 coming from the third-party reimbursements?

8 A Right.

9 Q Because the other amount would come whenever
10 someone abused those transportation services from the lottery
11 fund. So, you're talking about making savings in those areas
12 where the triple "A"'s have been picking-up the
13 reimbursements?

14 A Yes. When you say the triple "A"'s, now I want to
15 make it clear, that that ten (10%) percent does not
16 automatically -- does not create itself or generate itself
17 in the triple "A"'s; it's origin is the lottery fund, as
18 well.

19 Q Okay. That raises another question. Has there
20 been a reduction in the costs that triple "A"'s have incurred
21 in contracting transportation services that they've
22 contracted for before the 203 Program? Have the costs they
23 began to use the 203 Program, have they eliminated a number
24 of the contractor services that they had previously for
25 transportation?

1 A I couldn't answer that. I just don't know the
2 answer to that, Representative.

3 Q Then, my other question would be, what has been the
4 savings that the Department has had from their budget -- and
5 I'm talking about the General Fund segment of the budget --
6 because of the utilization of the 203 Program by the triple
7 "A"'s?

8 A Well, I'm going to answer that by stating this. It
9 is the Department of Transportation's feeling, and the
10 Department of Aging supports this feeling, that the program,
11 as conceived by the General Assembly, was never intended to
12 be a one hundred (100%) percent all the time free ride.

13 With that realization now -- you had a lot of
14 discussion today about the quarter-mile rule. The quarter-
15 mile rule as somebody -- and I think Representative Linton,
16 you mentioned this at the opening of the hearing -- has
17 always been around. It has seldom, however, been enforced.

18 The attempt on the part of the Department of
19 Transportation to enforce that and still allow those most in
20 need to get "free rides for essential services," I believe,
21 will be accomplished by the proposed regs.

22 Q You know, one of the -- I guess one of the
23 strongest groups of opposition to the proposed regs has come
24 from the triple "A"'s and the various constituencies that
25 your Department, in fact, services. And, yet, it's

1 interesting that many of the discussions around the
2 regulations, in all of the minutes that I have seen, have
3 involved, from time to time, checking with the Department of
4 Aging to make sure that that, in fact, agrees with your
5 understanding of how you think the program should operate.

6 A I have with me the testimony provided in Lockhaven
7 at Senator Corman's hearing on this same subject, presented
8 by Carleen Hack, the President of the State Association of
9 Triple "A" Directors. And, I can't honestly see a
10 substantial difference -- a substantial difference in what
11 the Department of Transportation and Aging administration is
12 advocating, and the triple "A" Directors Association.

13 Our intent is to accomplish the very same mission;
14 that's to provide the greatest amount of service, at the
15 lowest possible cost, to the greatest number of people.

16 CHAIRMAN LINTON: I think our intent is the same, but
17 I think the road to getting there may be different.

18 Representative Nahill?

19 REPRESENTATIVE NAHILL: Maybe we could ask them
20 if they'd like to hold it down. Some of the people, I
21 think, out there, want to hear, and I doubt if they can hear
22 anymore.

23 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Secretary.
24 If there are no further questions, we'd like to thank you
25 for your testimony.

1 I would like to ask -- I would like to ask all of the
2 audience to try to keep their voices down. It's probably
3 difficult sometimes for me to hear; and, if that's the case,
4 I know it's probably difficult for some of the others in the
5 room to hear. So, would you help us with that?

6 MAN IN AUDIENCE: May I ask a point of information? So
7 far, we've heard all the officials and so on and so forth.
8 When are our Senior Citizens going to get on?

9 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Well, I would like to mention to the
10 gentleman that we have about twenty-two (22) Senior Citizens
11 that are going to testify, and we'll probably get back here
12 again, to have Senior Citizens to testify.

13 Wait a minute. We have twenty-two (22) on the Agenda
14 for today.

15 I would hope that we can -- I'm hoping we're here all
16 for the same reason. And, I hope you'll give us the chance
17 to conduct the hearings, so that we can meet your concerns
18 and your needs. And, that's going to allow members of the
19 Senior Citizens' community to testify, and we're going to do
20 that.

21 CHAIRMAN LINTON: You're out of order, sir. Thank
22 you.

23 Miss Lang.

24 MISS LANG: I'd prefer not to stand with my back to
25 some of our people here.

1 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Very good.

2 MISS LANG: I'd like you to know that I represent all
3 of the older people in Fayette, Greene and Washington Counties
4 today. They could not be here because they don't have
5 transportation to get here.

6 Our 203 Program, to go out of County, you can only go
7 for medicals. You people are lucky that you do have some
8 transportation. So I'd like your cooperation in letting me
9 speak for three (3) minutes. Is that all right?

10 CHAIRMAN LINTON: That's all right.

11 MISS LANG: Thank you. We've learned that all older
12 people are created equal. Right? That's not right in
13 Pennsylvania. One year after that book, 1984, we find a
14 great disparity exists in the lottery transportation. What
15 is this double-standard? It's the difference in
16 transportation service provided to the older people in urban
17 areas, versus the transportation provided in rural areas.

18 If you are sixty-five (65) or older, and live in
19 Philadelphia or Allegheny Counties, you can ride public
20 transportation, or you can get on Access. In my area, we
21 don't have Access. If you are sixty-five (65) and older, and
22 live in a smaller city, without public transportation or a
23 rural area, you depend on the local transportation from the
24 203 carriers, or from the Area Agency on Aging.

25 If the new regulations promoted by the Pennsylvania

1 Department of Transportation are put into effect, there will
2 be an income guideline, and the older person who is above the
3 income guideline will have to pay for ten (10%) percent of
4 their ride. In addition, the ride will be restricted for
5 medical, nutrition or work purposes.

6 The promotion of income guidelines in a transportation
7 program should be for rural residents too. This program
8 discriminates unfairly against those rural residents, and
9 creates a situation of rural and urban inequities.

10 There is further inequities, in that those urban
11 programs are free, while the 203 regulations propose to charge
12 Senior Citizens a fee.

13 In short, because older residents of Allegheny and
14 Philadelphia Counties are provided free public transit during
15 non-peak hours, we feel that the 203 Program should extend
16 this effort into the non-metropolitan areas of Pennsylvania.

17 Furthermore, charging older people a ten (10%) percent
18 fee would present a hardship to some older people. Access to
19 services in rural areas presents a major problem in service
20 delivery to older people. I'm sure Representative Lloyd
21 would agree with that.

22 The older people -- The older people from the rural
23 areas have lobbied long and hard to have transportation
24 services provided to them on an equal basis, with those of
25 you who live in the urban areas. We are not opposed to

1 priority trips; we are not opposed to continuing the 24-hour
2 notice. We also agree that Section 203 should remain a
3 shared ride, demand response system.

4 We feel that an extra burden will be placed on the
5 provider and the triple "A"'s, in the income verification
6 process. The additional screening procedures may embarrass
7 Senior Citizens who are reluctant to declare their income.

8 The intent of the 203 Program regulations should help
9 to eliminate program abuses, but only with proper monitoring
10 of the transportation program. We are not aware of any
11 program abuses in the southwestern part of the state. In
12 fact, the Southwestern Pennsylvania Area Agency on Aging, has
13 been providing coordinated transportation between public and
14 private carriers, in four counties, since the inception of
15 the 203 Program.

16 The older people of southwestern Pennsylvania do not
17 feel they should be punished for the abuses of the 203
18 Program in other areas of the state.

19 The older people -- The older people of Fayette, Greene
20 and Washington Counties and the Mon-Valley have been
21 encouraged by the progress being made in the coordination of
22 the transportation system. They understand that certain
23 provisions need to be implemented to improve the 203
24 Transportation Program. However, these changes need not work
25 to the detriment of older people in Pennsylvania.

1 If the shared ride, demand response transportation
2 system has no income guidelines, and does not require older
3 people to pay their ten (10%) percent share, then we can truly
4 state that all older people are created equal.

5 In closing, I'd like to present a few specific problems
6 related to the rural area I represent, which is again,
7 Fayette, Greene, Washington Counties, and the Mon-Valley.

8 The Fayette County Commissioners have applied for
9 Section 203 in October of 1984. That's one year ago. Why has
10 this grant not been approved? The Area Agency on Aging is
11 spending Older Americans' money for the Fayette County older
12 residents to be provided with transportation.

13 In Greene County, there are no private carriers, no bus
14 companies, no taxi companies. So, the triple "A" and the
15 Washington-Greene Community Action provide the only
16 transportation for older people.

17 I'd also like to mention that the new reimbursement
18 maximum, as I understand it, is too low for rural areas. The
19 maximum would be Twenty-seven Dollars (\$27.00) for a one-way
20 trip. If an older person wanted to go from Washington,
21 Pennsylvania to one of the major medical centers -- say, for
22 example, Oakland -- the fare would be Thirty-two Dollars
23 (\$32.00), and the older person would have to pay the
24 difference. Additionally, an older person who lives outside
25 the suburban region, would have to pay anything over the

1 Twenty-seven Dollar (\$27.00) fare. This represents a further
2 inequity, which our older people are opposed to.

3 I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to provide
4 this testimony.

5 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Questions?

6 (No response.)

7 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Thank you very much for your
8 testimony.

9 I'd like to acknowledge the presence of Representative
10 Mike Veon from Beaver County.

11 Jean Williams, President of Allegheny County Aging
12 Service Providers.

13 MS. WILLIAMS: I, too, don't want my back to you.

14 My name is Jean Williams, and I'd like to say good
15 afternoon to all of you.

16 I wish to thank the Pennsylvania House of
17 Representatives of the Transportation Committee, for the
18 opportunity to express the opinions of the Federation of
19 Service Providers on the proposed regulations offered by
20 PennDOT, to Section 203 regulations for fare transit service.

21 The Federation of Allegheny County Aging Service
22 Providers consists of twenty-two (22) direct service providing
23 agencies for the elderly population. As the President of the
24 Federation, I am here today to voice in public our strong
25 opposition; and, yes, agreement, with a few of the pertinent

1 proposed regulations.

2 Several recipients of our service will be testifying
3 today on previous proposed regulations. But in the past
4 three (3) days, we have been privileged to have received the
5 more recent form. Therefore, my comments will be directed to
6 those.

7 On two occasions this past summer, PennDOT had proposed
8 specific changes in Section 203 shared ride regulations.
9 Section 203 allows Pennsylvania lottery funds to be used to
10 support specialized service to persons sixty-five (65) years
11 of age and older. The shared ride concept is an alternative
12 to public transportation; a system developed for those
13 elderly who cannot, for various geographic, physical and
14 psychological reasons, use fixed route transit service --
15 public transportation.

16 These changes would have denied service to thousands of
17 elderly citizens who could not get about, only by this system,
18 to their medical appointments, Senior Citizen Centers,
19 financial and legal institutions, and shopping centers. On
20 these past two occasions, the proposed changes were met with
21 enormous public outcry. Again, we predict that the public
22 will respond, because it seems that only limited adjustments
23 have been made.

24 The quarter-mile rule. The newly-proposed regulation,
25 which we obtained October the 14th, 1985, indicates

1 consideration of some of the obstacles we suggested, by the
2 Federation. But we still recommend the elimination of the
3 quarter-mile rule.

4 If PennDOT still feels or believes a test is necessary
5 to determine need, either a physician or a caseworker could be
6 permitted to certify the need, by medical findings or other
7 eligibility criteria, set forth by the coordination entity, as
8 designated by the governmental body responsible for such
9 activities.

10 Income guidelines and third-party sponsorship. The
11 income guideline, as posed by PennDOT, which determines
12 utilization of third-party sponsorship, does not, in our
13 opinion, take into consideration the individual or couples
14 who have inordinate expenses.

15 For example, housing, medical costs that greatly curtail
16 the amount of net income actually available. This is
17 especially significant for long-term medically ill
18 individuals.

19 Although the funding for transportation in Pennsylvania
20 is obtained from the lottery, we feel that the Federal Act --
21 the Older Americans' Act -- concept of eliminating any form
22 of a means test, should be seriously considered. Therefore,
23 we oppose -- We are opposed to any income guidelines.

24 Coordination of service. The proposed regulations is
25 to be initiated by January 1st, 1986. "Areas where two or

1 more contractors have overlapping service areas must have,
2 in effect, a coordinating transportation system. Contractors
3 in such areas, which are not part of the system, will not be
4 eligible for program reimbursement." I must applaud this
5 regulation, due to our experience here in Allegheny County.

6 Coordination of service is the most logical
7 administrative plan to eliminate duplication of service.
8 Duplication of service, as we all know, will automatically
9 cause a spiraling of costs, per trip, per passenger.

10 All of our goals are to have a more efficient and cost-
11 contained service. Therefore, we support the coordination of
12 service regulation.

13 Escort service. Escort service is approximately one-
14 third (1/3) of our share ride system. It is our feeling that
15 escorts continue to be allowed to ride free. Or, at fees
16 equal to the Senior, if evidence is on file. A physician or
17 caseworker statement, that the elderly person is unable to
18 travel unescorted, i.e., legally blind, mentally disoriented
19 or a diagnosed functional handicap, should be the determining
20 factor for the use of an escort.

21 A financial burden may be created if a family member or
22 Senior has to pay out of his pocket, and this could cause for
23 a lack of medical care. We are in opposition of this
24 regulation to eliminate the use of escorts.

25 Medical assistant clients. The new regulations

1 specifically state, "The Medicare and Senior Citizens'
2 transportation expenses would be obtained by the Department
3 of Public Welfare." We are suggesting that funds from this
4 Department be transferred into the Transportation Funds of
5 the Area Agencies on Aging, which would lessen the possibility
6 of a decrease in the level of service, and maintain continuity
7 throughout the total spectrum of care. In other words, I'm
8 saying, if they're in the system that receives all other
9 Senior care, then they need to be -- remain in the system,
10 and receive transportation by the same community.

11 It is, at this point, questionable if the Department of
12 Federal Programs has the resource to absorb these Medicare
13 clients into their current budget. And, if not, we fear
14 these people will be lost in the transition, and not receive
15 the medical transportation and care they may need. For these
16 reasons, we oppose this regulation.

17 Again, Committee, I would wish to thank you for your
18 time and patience, for listening for our -- our presentation.

19 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Ms. Williams, I'd like to thank you
20 very much for your taking the time to come and present your
21 testimony on behalf of the Senior Citizens that you represent.

22 I'd like to see if there's any questions from members
23 of the Committee before you're dismissed.

24 (No questions.)

25 CHAIRMAN LINTON: No questions. Thank you very much,

1 Ms. Williams.

2 Luigi Bazzoli and Mary DeLuca, Northern Area Multi-
3 Service Center.

4 MS. DeLUCA: My name is Mary DeLuca; I live -- Can you
5 hear me?

6 CHAIRMAN LINTON: The other mike.

7 MS. DeLUCA: Oh, okay. All right. This will be fine.
8 My name is Mary DeLuca; I live in Sharpsburg, Pennsylvania,
9 and I am seventy-four (74) years old. I'm here to give you
10 my views about the proposed change to the 203 regulations.

11 While I am concerned about my parts of the changes, I
12 am particularly upset about the quarter-mile rule. I live
13 within a quarter-mile of a public bus stop, as do most of my
14 neighbors. As a matter of fact, I think most of us live
15 within a quarter-mile of a bus stop. I am neither
16 functionally handicapped or mentally confused. But I will
17 tell you this, I can use -- I can't use a PAT Authority bus
18 to get to my Senior Citizen Center, to the three (3) doctors
19 I have to see on a regular basis.

20 For years now, I have depended upon the share ride
21 program. I am seventy-four (74), and find it impossible to
22 walk to a bus stop in bad weather. Public buses are often
23 crowded; this is hard on the elder people who are forced to
24 stand on a moving vehicle. In the share program ride, the
25 little bus picks me up at my house, and makes sure I get to

1 my destination safely. It is a godsend.

2 Now, the state is saying it was never meant for the
3 urban elderly, but only rural elderly. Is there no person
4 who lives in the city more healthy than the one who lives in
5 the country? It is all so silly.

6 Now, PennDOT is even saying, that the Port Authority's
7 deficit is being caused by the elderly who do not use a
8 public transportation. I thought the deficit was caused by
9 high-salary and generous labor contracts. But I am just an
10 old lady -- But I am just an old lady, so what do I know.

11 CHAIRMAN LINTON: A lot.

12 MS. DeLUCA: The only people who can bring PennDOT
13 back to reality, are you, our elected officials. You give
14 the lottery -- You gave us the lottery and transportation
15 programs. Don't let PennDOT take it away. Don't let PennDOT
16 create so much red-tape, that we will be served from using the
17 power transit system.

18 PennDOT is saying, "We really do not want you to
19 deprive an older person from using the program. If there is
20 a doctor's excuse or some other kind of excuse..." I am not
21 a child. I no longer need mother's note to hand to the
22 teacher, to prove I am telling the truth.

23 In closing, let me just caution you. Watch PennDOT
24 very closely. Make sure they don't sneak the red-tape
25 through the back door. If we have to be certified, let the

1 staff at the Senior Centers do it. They work with us daily,
2 and know us best. Thank you for your attention.

3 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Mr. Bazzoli. Oh, I'm sorry,
4 Mr. DeLuca. Ms. DeLuca, before you leave, I want to see if
5 any members of the Committee have any questions.

6 (No questions.)

7 CHAIRMAN LINTON: I'd like to thank you for bringing
8 your testimony, and I think the information was very helpful
9 for the members of the Committee.

10 Mr. Bazzoli.

11 MR. BAZZOLI: Thank you very much. My name is Luigi
12 Bazzoli. I'm here to speak in opposition to the changes in
13 the lottery funded para-transit system proposed by PennDOT.

14 I'm not speaking for myself, as a user of the service.
15 Contrary to what PennDOT seems to believe, the overwhelming
16 majority of the Senior Citizens do not abuse the system.
17 Those of us who are still able to use our own car, do so.
18 Those of us fortunate enough to be able to use public
19 transportation, do so.

20 Rather, I'm here to speak in behalf of the Senior
21 Citizens who have come to depend upon the service.

22 I live in the northern area of Allegheny County, for
23 the past thirty (30) years. I am -- I was in business in the
24 area called "Tarentum," and I know the people; grew up with
25 them.

1 For the record, I will state that I am the Treasurer
2 of the Highland Area Senior Citizens Center; I am the Past-
3 President of the Cheswick Springdale Lions Club, and the
4 former President of the Lower Valley Senior Citizens.

5 First of all, I refer to the article in the July 26th
6 issue of the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, where the officials of
7 the PennDOT are quoted as saying, "Changes are needed because
8 of many abuses of the system."

9 In reference to the Senior Citizens, "Senior Citizens
10 have abused the system," yet no specific abuses have been
11 stated. No proof of those has been submitted. I do not know
12 about the eastern part of the state, but I can testify the
13 Senior Citizens in the hills and valleys of our -- my area,
14 they're retired steelworkers and miners. The mothers and
15 fathers and grandparents of many in the general assembly have
16 not abused the system; they rely upon it.

17 PennDOT proposes, anybody who lies within a quarter of
18 a mile of a bus stop, should be denied the use of the para-
19 transit service, unless they have a doctor's excuse. Does a
20 doctor know when a bus is crowded or an elderly person is
21 forced to stand, because there is no seats? Does a doctor
22 know, that on the particular day, the weather is going to be
23 bad, that the Senior Citizen cannot walk to the bus? Of
24 course not.

25 In the state of Pennsylvania, I'll tell you, the Senior

1 Citizens, are they children, and need doctors' excuses to
2 benefit from their lottery funded program intended to help
3 them? I hope not.

4 The majority of the people that use the para-transit
5 service do not, because it's convenient. They do so, because
6 it's the only alternative to staying in their home. Trips to
7 the airports or bingo games or others are as few to be
8 insignificant. The people who use the service do not in order
9 get to the medical offices or Senior Citizen Centers or for
10 the shopping. Do you consider this type of trip unnecessary
11 or abuse of the system? I hope you do not.

12 Thank you for the opportunity to present my views in
13 vital matters.

14 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Thank you very much. All right.
15 Any questions for Mr. Bazzoli?

16 (No questions.)

17 CHAIRMAN LINTON: No, there aren't any. Thank you
18 very much, sir, for your testimony.

19 Mr. Ron McPherson, Anthony Fabio and John Kish.

20 MR. MCPHERSON: Mr. Chairman and members of the
21 Committee, I would like to defer the time first to the Senior
22 Citizens participants from the City of Pittsburgh, Department
23 of Parks and Recreation, Senior Citizens Program.

24 MR. FABIO: Mr. Chairman, Representatives of the
25 Transportation Sub-Committee, dignitaries, Senior Citizens

1 and witnesses. As a Senior Citizen, member of City Parks
2 Senior Advocacy Delegate Council, I am here to say that we
3 are diametrically opposed to PennDOT's proposed changes in
4 the 203 Program, which provides transportation for Senior
5 Citizens. This is another in a series of cutbacks, including
6 the proposed cuts in Social Security and Medicaid, that have
7 attacked our elderly in recent months.

8 Since the inception of the lottery subsidized transit
9 for our Senior Citizens, many have come to depend on the
10 medical and non-medical transportation services which are
11 provided. By making these proposed cuts, PennDOT will be
12 pulling the rug out from underneath these citizens, who have
13 come to depend on the services to maintain their independence
14 and integrity.

15 Let me address the individual proposed changes, very
16 briefly, as I am sure we all know what these changes are.
17 The quarter-mile rule, regardless of its date of inception,
18 does not take into consideration the many geographic
19 differences in the area, the inclement weather, or the
20 individual who uses the services, who, though not certified
21 to be handicapped, would experience difficulty in using the
22 public transportation.

23 Again, by imposing the income guidelines, the individual
24 expenses of that person will not be taken into consideration
25 when the guidelines are set.

1 Their proposal, to switch medical assistance clients to
2 the Department of Public Welfare for transportation services,
3 will cause most financially disad -- will cause a great deal
4 of confusion and apprehension, for those Seniors who are the
5 most financially disadvantaged.

6 Finally, the need for escorts. Especially, in certain
7 instances, for individuals, cannot be denied. It is hard
8 enough for some Seniors to get someone to accompany them to
9 the doctors, let alone having to pay their fare for that
10 person. There are times when escorts are mandatory, even
11 for otherwise basically healthy Seniors, who are going for
12 tests, or just as a psychological support for the client.

13 By these proposed changes, PennDoT is trying to lump
14 all Senior Citizens into group categories, in order to be
15 eligible to receive the service. No room is left for
16 individual situations or people as persons.

17 The specific need, at the specific time, cannot be met
18 if these proposals are implemented. It will represent a
19 definite decrease in the quality of service.

20 Also, by placing all the encumbrances of being certified
21 handicapped, verification of income, or measuring distance
22 from the bus stop to the house, it is making it more confusing
23 and difficult for each Senior to utilize the service.

24 By implementing these proposed changes, PennDoT will be
25 effectively discouraging the use and the availability of

1 transportation services to the Seniors who need it, through
2 intimidating and confusing qualifying procedures.

3 Therefore, we, the City Parks Senior Advocacy Council,
4 hope that this Committee will recommend that the proposed
5 changes not be implemented in the 203 Program. Thank you.

6 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Any questions from members of the
7 Committee? Could we have a copy of the testimony or could
8 you leave it?

9 MR. MCPHERSON: Yes, we will submit all of the
10 testimony together.

11 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Okay. Thank you.

12 MR. FABIO: We have here, Mrs. Anna Boloscho, who has a
13 prepared statement, which I will read for her.

14 MRS. BOLOSCHO: Mr. Fabio is going to read this for me.

15 MR. FABIO: Is that -- All right. I'm writing this
16 letter to explain to you how changes you are planning in the
17 transportation program for Senior Citizens will hurt people,
18 like me, who use the services.

19 I am soon going to be eighty-five (85) years old; I am
20 on medical assistance. And, recently, I have not been
21 feeling very well. I need to use both the cab for my doctor
22 appointments, and the Access for shopping and trips to my
23 Senior Citizens Center. When I need the medical cab now, I
24 just call the Director at the Senior Citizens Center where I
25 go on the South Side, the day before my appointment. And, I

1 know, I will have my cab there the next day.

2 When I read about the changes, I realized there are
3 changes that will effect those of us who are on medical
4 assistance. I will have to call some new office downtown
5 somewhere to get my medical cab, instead of calling my own
6 Center. I'll have to talk to some stranger who doesn't know
7 me, and maybe won't understand me. I'll also have to be
8 registered there, and call many days before my appointment.

9 I don't understand why they have to make these changes,
10 or what all of them are about. I feel confused and afraid
11 because everything has changed and new. What do I do if
12 something goes wrong? I won't know who to call or what to
13 do. I'm worried. I won't receive the same good service I've
14 always received from calling my own Senior Citizen Center. I
15 don't see why we, who receive medical assistance, have to be
16 picked out for different treatment. Why can't we get our
17 medical cab through our Center, like everyone else?

18 At my age, and with all my financial and health
19 problems, I don't want to have to worry about something I
20 need as badly as a medical cab. I really hope you won't
21 change this program, and I can still get my cab for the
22 doctors from my own Center. Thank you.

23 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Thank you. Thank you very much.
24 Mr. McPherson. Mr. McPherson.

25 MR. MCPHERSON: I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman.

1 CHAIRMAN LINTON: How many others do you have to
2 testify, sir?

3 MR. MCPHERSON: We have -- After Mr. Kish, we have
4 two others.

5 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Mr. McPherson, that was not my
6 understanding when the office was called to schedule those
7 from your group. You listed two names and yourself, and we
8 have all these other Seniors who are listed to testify also.

9 MR. MCPHERSON: Well, excuse me.

10 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Excuse me a minute, please. Okay.
11 Thank you, sir. Would you give us your name for the record,
12 please, and you may begin your testimony.

13 MR. KISH: Good afternoon. Mr. Chairman and members of
14 the Committee, I am John Kish, participant at the Greenfield
15 Senior Center, City of Pittsburgh, Department of Public Parks
16 and Recreation.

17 I am a Disabled Veteran, having served in World War II
18 in the South Pacific on a Navy destroyer. I almost lost a
19 leg, and had many injuries. I am now retired, and I do
20 volunteer work at the Veterans' Hospital. I am a regular out-
21 patient at the VA Hospitals and Clinics. I am an active
22 volunteer at the Highland Drive VA Hospital, until a year ago
23 this month.

24 While waiting to be seen by my clinic at the appointment
25 time, I suffered a major heart attack and cardiac arrest; and,

1 I was declared "dead." Now, I am reborn after one year. I am
2 really one year old.

3 After my heart attack, my doctors advised me not to
4 travel alone, or ride a bus, as I may have another attack. If
5 I were alone or I was on a bus when this occurs, and I don't
6 receive needed medical attention and care in time; and, I was
7 advised by my doctors to slow down, and still remain active.

8 I depend on Access, and having an escort with me, for
9 getting around, so that I do not have to sit at home alone
10 all the time.

11 On behalf of the Veterans and Senior Citizens, I want to
12 say that we need this Access Program. The cabs and vans get
13 us to our medical appointments quickly, saving us time and
14 worry. We need the escorts to be with us, as we are not
15 feeling well, as assistance to and from our appointments.
16 If a medical emergency occurs during this ride in an Access
17 vehicle, we can be transferred more quickly for medical care.

18 Now, as a Senior Citizens member at Greenfield, I have
19 been helped, many times, by calling up for Access; and, the
20 young lady we have there is the Director of the Greenfield
21 Center. She makes appointments with me to be picked up and
22 to be brought home. This is a very big help to me, and I
23 want to say that she is "A"-Number 1 in my book, the best.
24 And, I wish you'd keep this program up. Thank you.

25 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Thank you, Mr. Kish. Before you

1 leave, I have a couple questions.

2 BY CHAIRMAN LINTON:

3 Q Would the income guidelines, as being proposed by
4 PennDOT, would that impact upon you, personally? Would that
5 make it difficult for you to use the program?

6 A I -- I don't understand.

7 Q Okay. The Department, in their regulations, one of
8 the things they're talking about putting in is an income
9 ceiling. Those, I think, Seniors, singles, no more than Nine
10 Thousand Dollars (\$9,000.00) -- Twelve (12) and Fifteen (15)
11 --I'm on last year's figures. Twelve Thousand (\$12,000.00)
12 for singles, and Fifteen Thousand Dollars (\$15,000.00) for a
13 couple. Would that impact upon you? Would that make it
14 difficult for you to afford the services?

15 A That would -- That would cover me, yes, up to
16 Fifteen (15).

17 Q Okay. The other problem that you mentioned was the
18 escort service. You need the escort service --

19 A That's on the advice of my doctor. He advised me
20 to have someone with me, in case I may get an attack. That
21 they'll be able to help me, and call for assistance, because
22 I may be in some isolated area, or even in a bus. I may be
23 in the back of the bus and I may just pass out; the bus
24 driver may not get to me in time; by the time he'd call for
25 an ambulance or Medicaid and they'd come and pack me up, and

1 take me to the hospital, it would probably be too late.

2 Q Okay. Is that -- Is that escort person somebody
3 who normally is from your family or from the Center, or who,
4 -- lwho would be, normally, the escort person that travels
5 with you?

6 A My wife is the one that's my escort. Every time I
7 go up there, she is my escort.

8 Q She's your escort?

9 A Yes.

10 Q Okay. So, currently under the program, the way it
11 exists now, your wife does not have to pay, is that correct?
12 Because she's covered by the program.

13 A She's also a member of the Senior Citizens, and
14 she's over sixty-five (65) and covered with the program, yes.

15 Q So, she would be covered anyway?

16 A Yes.

17 Q Even if -- Well, because she meets the age
18 guidelines, she would be covered anyway, even if she was not
19 an escort, as a participant in the program.

20 MR. MCPHERSON: Mr. Chairman, the proposed changes
21 would eliminate the free escort. And, -- And, I'm sure
22 Mr. Kish would not be able to pay, even, you know, for
23 his wife.

24 CHAIRMAN LINTON: I understand the proposed changes
25 would eliminate free escort, but I'm saying with your wife

1 herself -- by herself, she would be eligible to use the
2 Access Program, she meets the age and other criteria,
3 necessary to participate. Now, if he had someone else, okay,
4 who now could go in the Program -- for instance, somebody
5 who is forty-five (45) -- who, now under the Program, they
6 would be able to escort him. With the new regulations, that
7 person would not be eligible.

8 MR. KISH: You mean to tell me then, I wouldn't be
9 eligible for an escort.

10 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Under the new regulations that have
11 been proposed, an escort person would have to pay. Okay.
12 They would have to pay all of the full fare for an individual
13 who would not be in the Access Program.

14 BY CHAIRMAN LINTON:

15 A How much more trouble is it for an Access vehicle
16 to pick one, two or three or four or five people, to take a
17 trip one, two or three places?

18 Q I'm not here -- I'm not defending what's being
19 proposed. I'm only suggesting to you what is being proposed.
20 And, we're here today to hear your concern. That's why I
21 want to talk to you and ask you some questions about your
22 particular problem, because this seems to be the first one
23 that we've heard today, where someone specifically talked
24 about that they have an escort, and their need for an escort.
25 That's why I wanted to ask you your problems about the escort.

1 A As I told you, it's the doctor's advice for me to
2 have an escort. Now, as I said, you have room in the Access
3 vehicle. Sometime I don't go direct to the Hospital, myself,
4 but in time I get up there. But they always have room for
5 one or two more. And, especially one more. And, I don't see
6 why they'd begrudge an escort for someone that's in need and
7 badly needed, in a case like mine.

8 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Okay. Thank you very much, sir.

9 MR. MCPHERSON: Mr. Chairman, with your indulgence, we
10 do have one other person who would like to speak, and then
11 our -- all the testimony we would have presented is written.

12 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Okay. Since Mr. McPherson has
13 indicated he's going to present his testimony, for the
14 record, and not testify, we'll allow another Senior from his
15 group to testify.

16 MS. MAJOR: Good afternoon.

17 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Yes. Would you state your name for
18 the record, please?

19 MS. MAJOR: Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee,
20 I am Josephine Major, participant at the Garfield --

21 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Just a minute, please.

22 MS. MAJOR: Okay.

23 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Take your time; speak into the mike;
24 just relax.

25 MS. MAJOR: Thank you. I am Josephine Major,

1 participant of the Garfield Bloomfield Senior Center, City of
2 Pittsburgh, Department of Parks and Recreation.

3 We need to continue the Access service. The elderly
4 shut-ins and disabled need to get out of their homes. Some
5 need an escort, or else they cannot care for themselves. At
6 our Center alone, we have people who use Access regularly, or
7 else they would become shut-ins. One has cancer; one has a
8 leg removed; one lives too far to walk to a bus because of
9 her age and related ailments. Then, there are those, who,
10 because of various problems, need to have an escort to
11 travel. They also would become shut-ins, if there is a fee
12 for an escort.

13 We need to continue the Access service, with the free
14 escort, and without the quarter-mile rule. Those who use
15 Access would be discriminated against, if there are charges.

16 Thank you.

17 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Thank you very much.

18 MR. MCPHERSON: Mr. Chairman and members of the
19 Committee, all of the testimony that has been given, will be
20 presented, written; and, also other testimony from Senior
21 Citizens, who are not present, will also be presented along
22 with mine. Thank you.

23 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Thank you very much for your
24 cooperation, Mr. McPherson.

25 I'd like to call up, now, Miss Margaret Davis and Mary

1 Goodwin, from the Southwest Services, Incorporated.

2 MS. GOODWIN: Good afternoon, members of the
3 Transportation Committee.

4 CHAIRMAN LINTON: You have to speak directly into it.

5 MS. GOODWIN: Ladies and gentlemen, and fellow Senior
6 Citizens, my name is Mary Goodwin, and I have been a recipient
7 of Access transportation since 1983. We are, once again,
8 gathered to defend ourselves against PennDOT's reduction in
9 service, provided to us by Access, which is the Allegheny
10 County Transportation System for the Elderly.

11 In my opinion, the new guidelines proposed by PennDOT
12 would be a severe burden on the elderly. I am a widow with
13 three children who live out of state. For thirty-five (35)
14 years, I worked, paid taxes, and served my community well,
15 until I became disabled in 1983, because of numerous medical
16 problems.

17 Access has been the only means for me to get to my
18 doctor, for therapy treatments, for trips to the hospital,
19 and for grocery shopping. Without this service, I, and
20 thousands of other Senior Citizens, would be literally
21 stranded, isolated, and imprisoned.

22 I think the quarter-mile rule is very restrictive,
23 because there are elderly that may need special medical
24 transportation, outside of our Senior Citizen bus transits,
25 that are valid.

1 This regulation, also, does not take into consideration
2 those elderly who are physical capable of walking to the bus
3 stop, but cannot read, understand, or are confused by bus
4 signs and schedules.

5 Many of these people do not know where to transfer, nor
6 have the presence of mind as to where they would get off. I'm
7 attaching a copy of a newspaper article, to my testimony,
8 which describes a recent situation between a bus driver and
9 elderly passenger, where the police were called to take her
10 off the bus, because it was after 4:00 P.M., and the bus
11 driver was requiring her to pay the dollar (\$1.00) fare. She
12 was taken off the bus because she could not understand the
13 limitations about the passes, and how to interpret it.

14 Another rule that is being imposed is the requirement
15 of verification for the patient's doctor concerning their
16 need for Access transportation.

17 If the elderly are too poor to even go to a doctor, how
18 will they receive such a supporting statement.

19 PennDOT is also requiring that, if an escort is
20 necessary to accompany a Senior Citizen, this must also be
21 reaffirmed by a doctor. Why penalize someone who wants to
22 help an elderly person?

23 Requiring escorts to pay may result in Senior Citizens
24 not getting the medical attention that they may need, because
25 they can get no one to accompany them on these visits. This

1 situation is probably most confusing to both the Senior
2 Citizens, and the income guidelines that are now being
3 considered. Twelve Thousand Dollars (\$12,000.00), per year,
4 for a single person; Fifteen Thousand Dollars (\$15,000.00), a
5 year, for married persons.

6 This should never be an inclusion, because of our
7 income, because our income is consumed by different medical
8 expenses, prescription drugs, therapy, housing and food.
9 Often, medical problems go unattended, because the elderly
10 have such a limited income to take care of their basic needs.

11 Therefore, the problems may compound themselves, which
12 may eventually lead to the death of that person. We are a
13 society that was never taught to respect the elderly. I,
14 like many, of our European counterparts.

15 The lottery funded share ride transportation program of
16 this state has been a very viable and effective program for
17 elderly Pennsylvanians, and I ask each of you to do everything
18 possible to keep this program operating in this manner.

19 Thank you for listening to my testimony.

20 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Thank you. Any questions, members
21 of the Committee?

22 (No response.)

23 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Our records indicate that a
24 Miss Margaret Davis was going to appear. Is she here also?

25 MISS DAVIS: Yes. Good afternoon.

1 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Good afternoon, Miss Davis. Thank
2 you for coming for us.

3 MISS DAVIS: Gentlemen, and to the members of the
4 House of Transportation. My name is Margaret Davis. I am
5 here to testify for the Senior Citizens and the lottery funds
6 of transportation here in Allegheny County. I would like to
7 voice my opposition to three (3) areas of the program that
8 PennDOT is attempting to implement.

9 First of all, the one-fourth mile rule should be
10 eliminated. I do not agree that if a Senior Citizen lives
11 within one-fourth mile of the bus stop, they should be
12 expected to use public transportation, because of mental
13 deterioration, severe weather conditions, and physical health
14 limitations.

15 Some Senior Citizens could not possibly get to the bus
16 stop, even if it was only one-fourth mile from their house.

17 I have a total knee replacement put in my left leg, and
18 also a plate. Many times, I lost my balance, and I've fallen
19 in my yard; I've fallen in my house. My physical condition
20 is such, that I have given a key to a neighbor, so that if
21 my children cannot reach me by phone, my neighbor would check
22 on me to make sure I am all right.

23 So, members of the Committee, I am one of those Senior
24 Citizens who could not adhere to the one-fourth mile rule
25 that is being proposed.

1 Secondly, I feel that income guidelines should not be
2 imposed on Senior Citizens, even though my income is not
3 nearly Twelve Thousand Dollars (\$12,000.00), a year. I do
4 not think those Senior Citizens, whose income is this amount,
5 should be made to pay for transportation. We Senior Citizens
6 must do so much with our fixed income.

7 I happen to still live in my own house. I sometimes
8 have to pay for things I did not anticipate; such as last
9 week, I had to pay half of my Social Security check to take
10 care of a plumbing problem. And, it wasn't too long ago,
11 that I had to get a new roof. These costs, plus large
12 medical bills for people who -- with long, serious illness,
13 make it difficult to put -- put our heads above water.

14 Finally, I do not feel that escorts should be made to
15 pay when they are accompanied by a Senior Citizen for a
16 visit to the doctor. If that Senior Citizen is unable, for
17 physical or mental reasons, to make the trip themselves, when
18 their children are not able to take them to the doctor or at
19 work, I must ask a neighbor to accompany me.
20 I do not feel that I could ask that neighbor to pay the fare,
21 when they are doing me a favor. I just cannot -- cannot
22 afford to pay the fare for them to escort me.

23 In a lot of instances, good neighbors and friends might
24 have to turn a Senior Citizen down, because of these costs.
25 And, in the end, it is the Senior Citizen who suffers.

1 I thank you for taking the time to listen to my
2 concerns. And, I hope that your Committee will do everything
3 possible to stop PennDOT from imposing these unrealistic
4 regulations on the Senior Citizens of this state.

5 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Mrs. Davis, I'd like to thank you
6 for taking the time to provide us with your testimony. And,
7 I'd like to note, for the record, however, that in regards to
8 the quarter-mile rule, under what's being currently proposed
9 under PennDOT, Miss Davis would not have to be concerned by
10 that, because it's quite obvious that she would be one of
11 those exemptions that's being mentioned in the list of
12 exemptions that will be eligible under the quarter-mile rule.
13 I wanted to mention that.

14 I'd like to also mention, for the record, that I have
15 received a statement from Mr. Andrew Sims, Chairman of the
16 Advisory Council of the Allegheny County Adult Services, Area
17 Agency on Aging. And, that will be submitted for the record.

18 Donna Glossner.

19 REPRESENTATIVE LLOYD: Glessner.

20 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Thank you, Representative Lloyd.
21 Since she's from Somerset County, are you going to set me
22 straight?

23 MS. GLESSNER: Okay?

24 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Ms. Glossner, you may begin your
25 testimony.

1 MS. GLESSNER: Thank you for the opportunity to
2 address the Committee on this issue. I speak on behalf of
3 the Somerset County Board of Commissioners. This Board has
4 direct on-going control of the Somerset County Transportation
5 Program, a demand responsive, shared ride system, operated by
6 a private, non-profit corporation.

7 The Somerset County Transportation Program was one of
8 the first demand responsive systems in the state --

9 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Excuse me. I'm having a difficult
10 time hearing our witness. Thank you. You may continue.

11 MS. GLESSNER: The Somerset County Transportation
12 Program was one of the first demand responsive systems in the
13 state to begin receiving funds through the Act 101 Program.

14 In the summer of 1981, when our system was established,
15 PennDoT's guidelines for the program were few. Working
16 closely with the bureau staff, we developed a program which
17 we felt was within the intents of the Act 101 legislation.

18 In the subsequent four (4) years of operation, the
19 County Transportation Program has received nearly Five Hundred
20 Thousand Dollars (\$500,000.00) in lottery funds through
21 Section 406 and 203 Programs. This degree of financial
22 support, along with fare subsidies from the Area Agency on
23 Aging and rider fares, has permitted us to provide more than
24 One Hundred and Forty Thousand (140,000) one-way trips in our
25 four (4) year history.

1 As we've all been reminded, the Section 203 Program was
2 designed with rural counties in mind, with an eye toward
3 providing rural Senior Citizens with the type of subsidized
4 transportation service which has long been available to urban
5 residents.

6 We came from Somerset to Pittsburgh today to let the
7 Committee know that the Section 203 Program has been effective
8 in rural areas. In Somerset County at least, the intensity
9 of the 101 legislation has been realized.

10 Senior Citizens have been provided with a much needed
11 service, which is cost-effective and non-profit. And, for the
12 first time, all residents of Somerset County, including the
13 handicapped, have been provided with shared ride public
14 transportation. And, most importantly, lottery subsidized
15 fares have made this transportation affordable for those who
16 need it most; that is, low-income Senior Citizens, many of
17 whom have no other source of transportation.

18 Let me briefly explain our system. We have twelve (12)
19 vehicles based in six (6) locations in our County, which
20 provide demand responsive service to the general public, five
21 (5) days per week. A minimum twenty-four (24) hour advance
22 reservation time is strictly required. Calls are received at
23 a central dispatch center equipped with a toll-free number.
24 Senior Citizens now make up eighty-four (84%) percent of our
25 ridership.

1 The service is used most frequently for trips to
2 medical facilities, Senior Citizens' Centers, and grocery
3 stores. Also, non-Senior Citizens, particularly low-income
4 adults who qualify for fare subsidies through the Adult
5 Services Block Grant Program, and the Public Assistance
6 Transportation Block Grant Program, make up an increasingly
7 large percentage of our ridership.

8 By careful management of our system, we have increased
9 our level of service by twelve (12%) to fifteen (15%) percent
10 in each year of service, without proportionate increases in
11 our budget. We have contained our costs by effective
12 scheduling; by basing vans in outlying areas to minimize
13 deadheads; by centralizing our dispatch and purchasing; by
14 preventative vehicle maintenance; by minimizing expensive
15 advertising; by limiting administrative costs; and, by paying
16 drivers only for those hours during which trips have been
17 scheduled.

18 We have controlled Senior Citizen abuse of the program,
19 by requiring all users to verify their age before using the
20 system, and by requiring users to carry an identification
21 card, issued by our office, when riding.

22 We have limited what has been called "overuse" of the
23 system, by accepting third-party fare subsidies, only for
24 essential service. The Area Agency on Aging pays ten (10%)
25 percent of a Senior Citizen fare for trips to medical

1 facilities, Senior Centers, grocery and drug stores, and
2 social services agencies only. Seniors must pay their ten
3 (10%) percent share for non-essential trips.

4 Our fares, which have never included commercial
5 inducements or rebates, have always reflected the economics
6 of shared riding, and they vary with the distance of the
7 trip. Our average fare of Four Dollars and Twenty-two Cents
8 (\$4.22) is well below the state-wide average of Five Dollars
9 and Seventy-six Cents (\$5.76).

10 As I said, we worked closely with PennDOT when we
11 established our system in 1981. Through the years, however,
12 as the program extended across Pennsylvania, the PennDOT
13 staff did not expand. Our communication with the bureau has
14 become less frequent, and less satisfactory.

15 The stories we hear of program abuse and mismanagement
16 are shocking to us. Now, we hear that the Section 203 Program
17 is out of control, and drastic measures must be taken to end
18 abuse.

19 As a rural program with four (4) years experience in
20 the 203 Program, we wish to leave the Committee with the
21 following suggestions: It's in the best interests of rural
22 residents to continue operating the Section 203 Revenue
23 Replacement Program at its current level. The service
24 provided with these funds is vital to the physical and mental
25 well-being of thousands of rural residents, especially low-

1 income Senior Citizens.

2 If the transportation needs of Senior Citizens are to be
3 met by the Section 203 Program, third-party sponsorship of
4 fares for essential services must be continued and encouraged.
5 Transportation to social service agencies should be included
6 in the list of trip types for which subsidies are allowable.

7 PennDOT staff must be increased to the extent that
8 meaningful and regular communication with grantees is
9 possible. Greater contacts with PennDOT staff can do more to
10 increase accountability and to reduce fraud, than any other
11 single measure.

12 Grantees should be provided with audit guidelines and
13 asked to provide the bureau with an annual audit report.
14 This, too, will increase accountability and limit fraud.

15 If changes are to be made in the Section 203 Program,
16 ample time for implementation of these changes must be
17 provided. In particular, at least three (3) months should be
18 allowed for initiation of program changes, which require
19 submission of doctor certifications, Senior Citizen
20 registrations, and PennDOT approval of forms and policies.

21 Finally, we endorse the coordination policy proposed in
22 the program regulations, and hope that the role of the
23 coordinating body will be defined even more completely in the
24 final regulations. This, like many other elements of the
25 proposal, is a long-overdue mandate, which will save lottery

1 dollars for more effective use by all system operators.

2 Thank you.

3 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Thank you, Miss Glessner. Before
4 you -- Before I turn the mike over to Representative Bill
5 Lloyd, I'd like to ask you a couple questions myself.

6 BY CHAIRMAN LINTON:

7 Q I guess there seemed to be some disagreement
8 between some of the remarks that were made by Harold Jenkins,
9 and you may have a different perspective on what's happening
10 in Somerset County, as far as you're concerned. But I'd like
11 to ask you one question in regards to coordination. You seem
12 to support that concept. Is there some kind of coordination
13 now being done between your agency and the Cambria County
14 Transportation Authority?

15 A No, there is not.

16 Q I thought that Mr. Jenkins eluded to some type of
17 coordination being done.

18 A No. We both provide service in that area, but we
19 have not coordinated.

20 Q Okay. You see the thing that -- that would -- that
21 the growth of the program, there has not been a corresponding
22 growth in the staff at the Department of Transportation to
23 accommodate that growth, and to make sure that you're being
24 serviced correctly, and also, to control the abuse. So,
25 you're suggesting, in essence, that there be an increase in

1 the staff to accommodate the increase and demand for the
2 program?

3 A I'm suggesting that the PennDOT staff be increased,
4 so that the programs can be monitored more carefully.

5 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Thank you. Representative Lloyd.

6 REPRESENTATIVE LLOYD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

7 BY REPRESENTATIVE LLOYD:

8 Q The kind of questions that Mr. Jenkins raised, I
9 think we ought to put on the record the other side of the
10 story. Specifically, with regards to why you believe that you
11 need to provide van service for at least a significant
12 percentage of the people who live in the Wimber Senior Citizen
13 Complex, or to get to the Senior Citizen Center?

14 A We have historically offered the service in Wimber
15 for two reasons: one, because a large percentage of the
16 persons who use the system are functionally handicapped. We
17 have now in our files at least twenty (20) certificates from
18 Senior Citizens, from their physicians, indicating that
19 they're unable to use public transportation. We feel that
20 these riders need more assistance, more personal service,
21 than can be provided by a kneeling bus, especially in winter
22 weather.

23 Q By "kneeling bus" -- What's a "kneeling bus"?

24 A Mr. Jenkins' buses are equipped to lower themselves
25 so that people can board more easily. But they're still

1 large buses, and there's still no assistance from the driver,
2 there's no help with packages, there's no escorting to the
3 door and back.

4 Q In your opinion, while he says that his buses are
5 handicapped-equipped, and they are, that is not really
6 adequate to take care of people who are classified as
7 functionally disabled in that particular housing complex?

8 A That's right. Also, we've offered the --

9 Q Do you have an estimate of what percentage that
10 would be?

11 A Of the functionally disabled?

12 Q Well, what percentage of the people who are in that
13 housing project who ride the vans are functionally disabled?

14 A I understand approximately sixty (60%) percent of
15 the -- there's about thirty (30) regular users in that
16 housing project.

17 Q And, of that sixty (60) -- of those who are
18 functionally disabled, would you say that probably all of
19 them or virtually all of them would really not be able to
20 function if they had to ride Mr. Jenkins' bus?

21 A Well, I'll tell you what happened. In August, we
22 ran an experiment. We closed our demand responsive service
23 to the Wimber residents who lived within one-quarter mile of
24 the bus stop for Mr. Jenkins' bus. None of the thirty (30)
25 regular riders, who normally used our demand responsive

1 system, were able or willing to use Mr. Jenkins' bus, and did
2 not use any service for those four (4) days. That tells us
3 something.

4 Q Okay. Now, also, there was a statement made with
5 regard to how long it takes to go five hundred (500) feet
6 between this housing complex and the Senior Center.
7 Mr. Jenkins said that trip takes three (3) minutes. Is that
8 consistent with what you've observed?

9 A No, it isn't. Our understanding of the Cambria
10 County Transit Authority bus schedule is that the people are
11 picked up and driven out of town, and turn around and come
12 back, so that they have to be on the bus for at least ten
13 (10) minutes, to make that five hundred (500) foot trip.

14 Q Okay. Now, on another point, the -- I know, based
15 on people that have contacted my office, that you are not
16 able to provide transportation everyday to every part of the
17 County, and even to every village -- built-up area of the
18 County. Is that right?

19 A That's correct.

20 Q And, is it -- am I also correct, that even in some
21 of those areas that you provide transportation on a fairly
22 regular basis, that it's not possible to provide that
23 transportation everyday?

24 A That's correct.

25 Q And, I also -- You also pointed out that you

1 operate five (5) days a week. Does that mean that there is
2 no transportation provided by anybody --

3 A That's right.

4 Q -- on Saturdays and Sundays, is that right?

5 A That's right. That's why we welcome the
6 coordination policy, and we feel that there's room for
7 private carriers to become involved in Somerset County, and
8 provide some service on evenings and weekends. To date,
9 there are no private carriers involved in the County.

10 Q And, that same type of thing, we could probably
11 find in a lot of other small, rural counties, don't you thing?

12 A Um-hmm.

13 Q And, so, that's one of the reasons why those of us
14 in the rural area get so concerned that we make sure that in
15 any of the changes that are made in the program, that there
16 be adequate money available that we can continue to expand
17 our services. That's what you --

18 A That's right. We'd love to offer service, evenings
19 and weekends, if we could afford it.

20 Q Now, one of the things that Mr. Jenkins said we
21 ought to do is go back to the nine ten -- or rather the
22 seventy-five (75) - twenty-five (25) rule.

23 A Um-hmm.

24 Q Now, my understanding is that what a lot of rural
25 areas do is to take block grant money which is available to

1 the Area Agency on Aging, and pick-up that -- pick-up some of
2 the transportation. If we went back to seventy-five (75) -
3 twenty-five (25), what impact would that have on the
4 transportation program in our County?

5 A I'm certain that the Area Agency on Aging would be
6 unable to pay that twenty-five (25%) percent share for all
7 the trip types which they now pick-up. They now pay that ten
8 (10%) percent share, for all essential trips, and it permits
9 people to ride, who don't have the wear with all to pay their
10 own fare.

11 Q You agree with me then that, if we were to follow
12 Mr. Jenkins' proposal in this rural area, that would be a
13 step in the wrong direction, and there would be less Senior
14 Citizen transportation available than there is now?

15 A That's right.

16 REPRESENTATIVE LLOYD: Okay. Very good. Thank you.

17 CHAIRMAN LINTON: I want to just continue the line of
18 questioning for just a minute.

19 BY CHAIRMAN LINTON:

20 Q You made mention that approximately -- a
21 guesstimate, I guess -- maybe sixty (60%) percent of the
22 people who are in the Wimber facility are functionally
23 disabled. Okay. Under the proposed PennDoT regulations,
24 those sixty (60%) percent, would still be eligible to use
25 your services. Okay. The other forty (40%) percent, you

1 suggest that they would not be able to or are physically able
2 to use the services provided by the Cambria County
3 Transportation Authority?

4 A Oh, we believe they're able, and we welcome them to
5 ride the Cambria County Transit Authority bus. We have
6 offered this service because we were under the understanding
7 that PennDOT permitted users to use a demand responsive
8 system, if it met their needs. And, the public transportation
9 did not meet their needs. And, we feel that that route --
10 because of the circuitous route that it follows, and also
11 because it is a large bus and has no driver to help the
12 rider, it does not meet that person's needs. And, so, we
13 have provided that service.

14 If, in the future, PennDOT requires us to only provide
15 service to those who are functionally disabled, then that's
16 what we'll do. And, the others can use public transportation
17 in the fixed route.

18 Q Well, I'm not necessarily advocating one position
19 or the other, at this point. I'm trying to solicit from you
20 your opinions on whether or not those other forty (40%)
21 percent can reasonably handle public transportation to get
22 to and back to the Center.

23 A Yes. I think there's room for both. I really
24 believe we need both types of transportation in Wimber, and I
25 hope Mr. Jenkins and I can work this out.

1 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Thank you. I think Representative
2 Lloyd has a bus trip he needs to take in Somerset County.

3 REPRESENTATIVE LLOYD: That is not my legislative
4 district. That is Representative Kelley.

5 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Well, I'll mention that to him on
6 the floor. Thank you very much.

7 Dolores Podari, Hill Council Association.

8 MS. PODARI: I would like to thank the members of the
9 Pennsylvania House of Representatives, Transportation
10 Committee, the opportunity to express my view on the issue
11 regarding PennDoT's proposed change for the parenting to the
12 person sixty-five (65) years of age and over.

13 I am very disturbed about PennDoT's proposed change to
14 the Senior Citizen transportation reservation. I rely on the
15 aged transportation to allow me to continue an active life of
16 the community. I worry that without transportation service,
17 I, and a high percentage of Seniors, would be forced to limit
18 or discontinue many daily activities.

19 I strongly believe that the individuals that are
20 proposing these changes are unaware of the hardships they will
21 cause.

22 The quarter-mile rule does not take into consideration
23 the fact that many Seniors cannot use public transportation,
24 even when the bus stop is within one-quarter mile of their
25 home. Geography, weather and mental states are all

1 obstructions to using public transportation. I find it
2 difficult to climb hills, walk or stand for a long period of
3 time, particularly in failing weather conditions.

4 I also experience difficulty in boarding transportation
5 and bus transfers. Senior Citizens are also restricted
6 because the lottery supported public transportation only
7 provides free transportation to persons sixty-five (65) and
8 over, 9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.

9 I have many activities, doctors appointments, for
10 instance, which will begin before 9:00 A.M., and after 4:00
11 P.M. As a result of these changes, I would be forced to
12 become less active and less independent.

13 To eliminate free escorts or shared ride fares may
14 cause a greater problem. Particularly, for those persons who
15 are unable to travel unassisted, which includes individuals
16 with a twenty (20%) percent vision or blind, and those with a
17 hearing difficulty and motor weakness.

18 Put yourself in my position. I need, and depend on
19 aging transportation service, and strongly request your
20 support to maintain this vital service. Let the Senior
21 strength of yesterday be the wisdom of tomorrow.

22 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Thank you very much. Any questions?

23 (No response.)

24 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Thank you very much for your testimony.

25

1 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Okay, Mrs. Podari, thank you very
2 much for your testimony.

3 Mr. William Mellar from the PAT, Port Authority
4 Transportation.

5 MR. BEELER: Mr. Chairman, Members of the Transportation
6 Committee, and Ladies and Gentlemen of the audience, thank
7 you for this opportunity to appear before you and discuss
8 proposed changes in the Section 203 Program for Senior
9 Citizens. I am Allen Beeler, Director of Planning and
10 Business Development, speaking on behalf of William Mellar,
11 Executive Director of Port Authority.

12 We wish to commend the Transportation Committee for
13 responding to local community concerns and conscientiously
14 seeking solutions to problems relating to control and funding
15 of the Section 203 Program.

16 The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation published
17 a set of new regulations governing it's 203 Program in July.
18 It was our belief that many of those rules would have crippled
19 the program. The very people it was intended to serve would
20 have been denied service.

21 We commend PennDot for working with those who would
22 have been affected and making modifications in the rules. We
23 are pleased that PennDot's most recent proposed rules, dated
24 September 27, resolved a number of our original objections.
25 Nevertheless, we continue to have concerns that some of these

1 rules will impose administrative burdens and economic
2 inefficiencies.

3 Further, elimination of third party sponsorship would
4 be a significant hardship to large numbers of senior citizens.
5 The purpose of the proposed rules is apparently to reduce
6 lottery program costs. However, we understand that there are
7 sufficient lottery funds to finance the 203 Program. If this
8 is not true and the real target is isolated abuse of the
9 program, the burden of cost control should not be placed on
10 senior citizens and transit authorities.

11 If needed, we believe there is a relatively easy
12 solution to cost control, and I'll discuss that in a moment.
13 First, I would like to tell you a little bit about the Port
14 Authority Access Program.

15 Access is a door-to-door, advance reservation, shared
16 ride service which operates in Allegheny County. Access is
17 unique in that it was originally organized to make use of
18 existing -- Correction. It was organized to make use of
19 existing taxi cab companies and social service agencies to
20 provide the service, rather than duplicating their services by
21 PAT buying new equipment and hiring additional staff.

22 Currently, there are fourteen (14) carriers under
23 contract to Access. Access also coordinates the
24 transportation demands of individuals in sixty-three (63)
25 social service agencies to insure the trips are grouped in

1 the most efficient manner.

2 Access has been designated by the federal government as
3 a national model for other cities who are seeking a practical
4 and cost effective method of furnishing transportation
5 service.

6 Our regular Port Authority vehicles used in fixed route
7 service include special features to aid elderly and many
8 handicapped persons. Access performs as an essential mass
9 transit supplement by serving people unable to use regularly
10 scheduled fixed route transit service.

11 Access has become indispensable in this urban area
12 dominated by hills and river valleys, and has given back an
13 independent lifestyle to thousands of elderly and handicapped
14 individuals in Allegheny County.

15 The success of Access is evidenced by the tremendous
16 growth in ridership, from a starting level of fifteen hundred
17 (1,500) passenger trips per month six years ago, Access now
18 carries about one hundred thousand (100,000) passengers per
19 month.

20 At the same time, the cost per trip is on the decline.
21 It has decreased by over forty-one percent (41%) over the past
22 six years, while inflation has increased forty-eight percent
23 (48%) during the same period.

24 One reason Access has been able to deliver good service
25 at a shrinking cost is because considerable attention has

1 been paid to administering and managing the program. And
2 therefore, we feel qualified to comment today.

3 The Section 203 Program is being used by an ever
4 increasing number of people. A one hundred and twenty
5 percent (120%) jump in Access senior citizen ridership
6 occurred after the 203 Program fare subsidy was raised from
7 seventy-five percent (75%) to ninety percent (90%) last year.
8 Today sixty percent (60%) of all trips taken at Access are
9 taken by senior citizens under the 203 Program.

10 Ironically, it's the popularity of the program that has
11 caused concern among many officials. They worry that too many
12 people are using it and that state lottery revenues will not
13 be sufficient to cover expenses. However, it is not
14 unreasonable -- or it is not reasonable to expect that a
15 possible financial problem can be resolved by a set of
16 complicated regulations that are extremely difficult and
17 costly, and in some cases impossible to implement and enforce.

18 We agree there needs to be a method to encourage those
19 senior citizens who can use fixed route service to do so.
20 Recent attempts by PennDot to modify the quarter-mile rule to
21 allow for hardship cases are to be commended. But we submit
22 that they're, from a practical standpoint, the quarter-mile
23 rule is an administrative nightmare. Five pages of rules
24 govern this one regulation alone.

25 A second concern is that the proposed rule -- A second

1 concern is the rule related to escorts. While the rule has
2 been relaxed from an earlier version again, it is not clear
3 whether escorts would be required to pay a fare. Access
4 rider escorts pay no fare and we believe it's very important
5 to be able to continue this policy. Having escorts ride free
6 has provided much greater utilization of Access for senior
7 citizens needing special assistance.

8 Another questionable item is the rule that only Area
9 Agencies on Aging across the Commonwealth could be third
10 party sponsors of shared rides. Does this mean that other
11 agencies employing professional staffs to serve elderly and
12 handicapped clients are less deserving than Area Agencies on
13 Aging? It would mean that the big job of grouping ride
14 sharing trips in an economical and orderly fashion, now
15 handled by the staffs of many different agencies, would have
16 to be assumed by and centralized in the offices of Access.

17 Operating and administrative costs would obviously rise
18 and the overall efficiency of the program would decrease. Of
19 even more serious consequence is the adverse effect such
20 change would have on individuals compelling them to pay for
21 and make their own travel arrangements.

22 Many third party social service agencies deal with the
23 needs of frail and handicapped senior citizens. Typically,
24 these residents have very low incomes, and in fact, do have
25 trouble arranging transportation service. We do not believe

1 that the legislature intended such hardship for such older
2 residents when it enacted the 203 Program.

3 We doubt that there is a financial problem due to lack
4 of lottery funds. If there is concern, however, over the
5 growth of the 203 Program, it's because of the change -- we
6 believe it's because the change of the law last year raising
7 the subsidy to ninety percent (90%). And as I mentioned
8 earlier, if a solution is needed to that problem, there is an
9 easy one. The solution is to return to the seventy-five,
10 twenty-five subsidy level as originally enacted by the
11 legislature.

12 A return to the seventy-five percent (75%) subsidy would
13 accomplish the following: We believe it would curb overuse.
14 The out-of-pocket cost would encourage persons to, again,
15 chose fixed route bus service where needed.

16 In Allegheny County a 203 Program trip today can be
17 taken for as little as forty cents (\$.40). This makes it very
18 attractive to use. If the amount the individual or agency has
19 to pay is increased, experience has shown they will return to
20 the least expensive mode.

21 Eliminate the administrative burden -- It would
22 eliminate, also, the administrative burden if the subsidy was
23 changed. A set of complex quarter mile regulations will not
24 be needed to restrict the use of the program. Persons who
25 don't really need the demand responsive service will opt for

1 the least expensive mode and return to the fixed routes bus.
2 Administrative time and effort can then be devoted to more
3 productive activities.

4 And finally, we believe this change would preserve the
5 program and this funding source. The state will spend less
6 money on this program by paying less money per trip for fewer
7 trips. And we believe that this will insure that the money
8 will be there for those who really need the 203 Program.

9 I'm confident the Transportation Committee will act in
10 the best interest of many senior citizens in need of shared
11 ride trips.

12 Thanks for the opportunity to express our views.

13 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Thank you, Allen -- I didn't get the
14 last.

15 MR. BEELER: Allen Beeler.

16 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Allen Beeler. Mr. Beeler, I guess
17 you come with kind of a unique situations in many of the
18 other members of PAMTA that probably exist in a neighborhood
19 where the 305 Program is being operated by either private
20 firms or other providers. And I guess you're the only one
21 where there's, at this point, coordination being provided by
22 the Transit Authority themselves. So you have a unique
23 perspective to provide to this committee.

24 One of the regulations that's being proposed by the
25 Department would, I guess, require coordination similar to

1 your own in the other parts of the state. And I guess one of
2 the concerns of the PAMTA members in those areas where
3 they're competing, and their concern about the quarter-mile
4 rule, relates to their loss of ridership.

5 With all that being said, what has been your experience
6 with the Access Program? You made mention that you had some
7 concerns about strong enforcement of the quarter-mile rule?

8 A Yes. The quarter-mile rule is a very complex one.
9 As I mentioned, Access carries over a hundred thousand people
10 a month now. To try and deal with thousands of persons,
11 theoretically, each month, because there are new senior
12 citizens joining the program each month, and trying to deal
13 with individually those persons to determine whether or not
14 the quarter-mile would apply is really a very, very tough job
15 administratively. And that's why, if it is true that the
16 lottery fund is in danger of being depleted, which we
17 question, but if it is true, then we say that perhaps we
18 ought to look at something that's a lot simpler to administer.
19 And that's why we suggested the changes we did suggest.

20 Q I guess you're also suggesting that the way your
21 system currently operates you don't have a problem with the
22 current enforcement or nonenforcement of the quarter-mile
23 rule. You don't see that as necessarily competing with your
24 reduced ride or free ride transit on your other vehicles?

25 A Not quite, and the reason I say "not quite" is this.

1 We are very interested in making sure that the least expensive
2 mode is chosen to carry senior citizens. We would hope that
3 able bodied senior citizens who are within the quarter-mile,
4 or wherever able bodied citizens may reside, we hope they use
5 our fixed route service. But we also recognize, for instance,
6 that fixed route service is not available at all times during
7 the day, so when persons need it and it's not available we
8 are very, very much in support of those persons using Access.

9 You mentioned the coordination role with Access. My
10 only comment, perhaps in deference to some of my other
11 brothers in the transit industry, is that we have found
12 coordination to be very workable, very honestly, because we
13 spend a lot of time at it. And much of -- also, I can tell
14 you, the success of the Access Program has been the fact that
15 we have tried very hard, and will continue to do so, to work
16 with senior citizens directly because they know their needs a
17 lot better than we. And it's because, I think, we've tried
18 to work at that that we've been successful.

19 Q In your role as coordinator, do you solicit RFPs to
20 the providers? Do they contract with you for the services?

21 A The way we work our system is this: The Port
22 Authority hires an agent -- something called an
23 "Agent-Broker," and that is a firm. And in Pittsburgh the
24 firm's name is Access Transportation Services Incorporated.
25 And that firm then serves as our agent-broker. That firm,

1 then, in turn issues higher fees to the carriers. We now have
2 fourteen different carriers, made up, interestingly enough,
3 both of private as well as sort of quasi-private agencies, in
4 this case social services agencies themselves are a part of
5 the team, as well as taxi cab companies. And they also put
6 those who have the demand for the service together with the
7 carriers.

8 So, again, it could be individuals or it could be
9 social service agencies, in fact, third party agencies.

10 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Thank you. Thank you very much for
11 your testimony; it's very helpful.

12 MR. BEELER: You're welcome.

13 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Mrs. Helen Solomon, United Jewish
14 Federation Senior Citizens' Program.

15 MRS. SOLOMON: Gentlemen, I speak as a rider of Access.
16 PennDot, by attempting again to implement new routes for after
17 sixty-five plus transportation program, will change the system
18 that has helped thousands of older adults.

19 When it first started tickets were issued for the
20 disabled, and doctors were not involved. Magic Carpet
21 was a known means of transportation for the disabled elderly.
22 Now doctors will be asked to attest whether a patient is
23 indeed, quote: "functionally disabled." This is nonsense.

24 Access was established in order to accommodate all
25 riders over the age of sixty-five, and no income levels

1 considered either.

2 When books of twenty tickets for Ten dollars (\$10.00)
3 were available for all over age sixty-five, I was happy
4 because we live far from the bus. Last year the price for
5 tickets was reduced to Four dollars (\$4.00). This was a boon
6 for many who could not afford the higher price, and older
7 citizens ride free on the buses between nine a.m. and four
8 p.m.

9 PennDot has been concerned that the number of elderly
10 riding the buses has diminished due to increased usage of
11 Access. Nonsense. If this is so, than Access is a more
12 valuable mode of transportation for us because more people
13 are going places now who could not do so before.

14 PennDot is now stating that if a passenger's origin and
15 destination are both within one-fourth of a mile of a transit
16 stop, we would not be eligible for Access unless we are
17 certified by our physician as functionally disabled.

18 Even though I may not be classified as functionally
19 disabled, I do have trouble standing for long periods of
20 time, my walking is impaired, and because I have trouble with
21 my arms it's difficult for me to hoist myself onto a bus. Are
22 we supposed to hire surveyors to measure the distance from
23 our homes to the bus stop? Nonsense.

24 What about the buses? They are not all equipped with
25 low enough steps to accommodate those who have difficulty

1 climbing. It's unreasonable to expect an elderly person to
2 walk up or down a hill on frozen sidewalks, sometimes covered
3 with wet leaves or ice, in order to get to a bus stop.

4 Then there's the weather to be concerned about. Hot or
5 cold, it makes walking difficult. How about standing at the
6 bus stop where there are no benches, waiting a long time for
7 the bus?

8 It has also been mentioned transportation is needed to
9 medical appointments, senior centers, and shopping. Is
10 PennDot not aware that Access also keeps seniors on the move
11 so they can be more productive, socialize with friends, be
12 useful through volunteer work, take classes, and travel? In
13 short, use our minds as well as our bodies.

14 VOICE: Amen.

15 MRS. SOLOMON: Going to the airport, to bingo, to the
16 hairdresser, to a restaurant are described as luxuries that
17 should not be provided for with lottery funds. Are these
18 kinds of activities abusive? Nonsense. If one of these
19 places gets a senior out into the community, it is a valuable
20 service. If restrictions will be made on costs to the
21 airport, I would like to remind our service changers that the
22 bus costs more to New York than the airplane. Not just the
23 rich ride planes anymore. A service is provided at the
24 airport for disabled, such as a wheelchair at the entrance.

25 Access is safe. Many are afraid to go out alone in the

1 daytime, and especially at night. My husband and I were both
2 mugged in broad daylight. Must we be afraid to go out at
3 night on our dark streets to the bus stop because we are
4 classified as disabled? Nonsense.

5 Now, talk is being made about charging escorts. They
6 may be charged fifty percent of the shared ride fare. My
7 husband goes with me as my escort because it's important he
8 hears what the doctor says regarding my health. We go other
9 places also, and it does not seem fair to pay that much extra
10 for him, as he is also over age sixty-five.

11 New guidelines, quote: "...were aimed at cracking down
12 on abuse the program, raising the level of accountability by
13 the private service provided." There has been no evidence of
14 wide scale abuse of the system here in Pittsburgh. Abuses
15 should be dealt with individually where they occur. The
16 whole system should not be penalized.

17 Any endeavour so widespread in a big state like
18 Pennsylvania, and involving so many people is bound to have
19 some difficulty. But in the time since this program has been
20 implemented, it's amazing that abuses are not more prevalent.
21 This is because we elderly need it so much most of us would
22 not, quote: "bite the hand that feeds us," or harm the
23 transportation we so need.

24 These new guidelines from PennDot would cause
25 unnecessary hardship for thousands who depend on a

1 para-transit system designed to make it easier for us to
2 function in the community. I expect the abuses would end
3 with PennDot and the governor of Pennsylvania. They will
4 be abusing the elderly if these plans are finalized.

5 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Thank you very much, Mrs. Solomon,
6 for your testimony. It was extremely helpful. I'd like to
7 thank you for taking the time to come before our committee.

8 Miss Virginia Dudash, Eastern Area Adult Services?

9 Olga Marcheck?

10 OLGA MASON: I'm Olga Mason, Brighton Heights. I have
11 a little story here to tell you that involves me. It was at
12 an interesting site that I first learned about the quarter-
13 mile rule. Several senior citizens were seated at the table
14 enjoying their noonday meal. That's the time when a lot of
15 conversation takes place.

16 On this particular day the discussion focused on two
17 words: "quarter-mile."

18 What does that "quarter-mile" mean? As the conversation
19 progressed I began to take a keen interest in the subject. I
20 learned that the quarter-mile refers to the distance between
21 the beginning of a trip and the destination. Both beginning
22 and destination must be within a quarter-mile of a fixed
23 route transit stop.

24 Now to some this may seem like a very short distance.
25 In reality it's a big problem to others, especially when

1 walking is difficult or painful.

2 Around Christmas time I caught the flu. That's when I
3 learned what it is to be dependent on others for
4 transportation, whether it be a quarter-mile or more. From a
5 self-sufficient, proud elderly senior citizen, I have become
6 a tired, sick woman, depending on relatives for every
7 necessary trip to the doctor's office.

8 After several weeks at my sister's home, I returned to
9 my apartment, alone. This gave me plenty of quiet moments for
10 thought. How was I to get around without transportation, no
11 car? Of course, there was the PAT bus, but the bus stop was
12 some distance away. How was I to get my groceries? How to
13 pay my bills? By check of course. Supposing there was no
14 checking account, what then? Then it meant taking a bus to
15 the utility offices, which weren't too far away, or call a
16 neighbor, a friend, maybe a relative again, somebody.

17 No, I wasn't going to impose on anyone anymore. No
18 way, not if I could help it. I tried walking. I got dressed,
19 put on a heavy coat, boots, a scarf. Outdoors my knees felt
20 as if - wobbly. Several times I stopped to catch my breath.
21 There was a highrise up ahead, and I wondered how the citizens
22 there got around. How far from here back to my apartment
23 seemed so far away. I could use a ride now.

24 Since then I've recovered sufficiently to use the PAT
25 bus. For those less fortunate than I, there's PennDot

1 service, yes. However, PennDot should eliminate the idea of
2 the quarter-mile. Thank you.

3 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Thank you very much.

4 Charles Burrell and Amalda Moore, from the Council of
5 Three Rivers American Indian Center.

6 SARA WARNER: My name is Sara Jane Warner, and I'm the
7 Director of the Elderly for the Council of Three Rivers
8 American Indian Center.

9 My elderly participants are not feeling too well and
10 they are not here. One left with me his testimony, and I
11 wanted to read it in his absence. Charles Burrell, okay?

12 "Mr. Chairman, Committee Members, good afternoon. My
13 name is Charles E. Burrell. I'm a native American and a
14 participant in the Native American Elderly Program of the
15 Council of Three Rivers American Indian Center, Incorporated,
16 COTRAC, for short.

17 As you likely know, COTRAC serves the needs of the
18 native American community of most of Pennsylvania and of the
19 State of West Virginia. I'm here to speak on behalf of that
20 communities' elders. In this area there are more of us than
21 most non-Indians realize. As was the case in the past, we
22 remain the overlooked, the forgotten.

23 I have come here to ask that our needs not be overlooked
24 and forgotten when it comes the time to vote on the change in
25 the 203 regulations that PennDot has proposed.

1 First off, let me remind you that we are poor people.
2 We are forced to live in those areas where we can afford the
3 housing. That means that most of us live in what is known as
4 "high crime" neighborhoods. That means that we risk life and
5 limb every time that we walk out into the streets of our
6 neighborhoods.

7 Maybe you haven't heard that the "junkies" who loaf on
8 our streets believe that there is year round open season on
9 our older folks. But we know the fact, that is true. It's
10 particularly dangerous for an older person to stand around on
11 a corner waiting for one of the slow running buses. That's a
12 tipoff to the "junkies" that the older person likely has some
13 money for shopping or for paying a doctor.

14 PennDot's proposal that would require all older persons
15 to walk to any bus stop that is a quarter-mile from where the
16 person lives is a real hardship for elderly people. Not only
17 is there a real danger from the dope-crazed youngsters
18 loafing around the streets, but there is the physical torment
19 involved.

20 In good weather, when the streets are dry, a quarter-
21 mile walk is more than any older person can stand; and that's
22 considering only a level street.

23 You've got to consider that older folks aren't as agile
24 as when we were younger. We can't handle snow and ice
25 underfoot, especially if we have to climb a hill, or go down

1 it.

2 You take my wife and me. Both of us have heart
3 problems. Both of us have arthritis. In addition, I've got a
4 bad back. Brought me out of the mill onto a pension. And I
5 have loss of circulation in my legs, my feet, and my hands.
6 A short walk or standing very long, sets my wife's knees to
7 aching, and she has to get off her feet. For me, it's my
8 back and my legs, and the ache is as bad as a toothache.

9 Then there's the other thing. When your legs don't
10 work so good, it's a long step up to get on the bus, and
11 another long step down to get off of it. If the bus is
12 crowded then we have to stand, and that's rough. Clinic
13 doctors never seem to think about that when they schedule
14 older folks to come in. They always want you there at the
15 clinics first thing in the morning.

16 And there's this other thing that PennDot proposed.
17 That escorts not be allowed to ride with us on the vans for
18 free. A lot of our friends can't get around without an
19 escort. For that matter, my wife couldn't get around the
20 city without an escort. You see, ever since she had all
21 those shock treatments back about twenty years ago, her
22 memory isn't worth a darn. She has to have someone with her
23 to tell her which bus to catch, and then where to get off of
24 it or she gets lost.

25 Of course, as long as I'm able I'll look after her.

1 But what about when I'm in the hospital and she wants to come
2 visit me? She can't get there unless someone leads her.
3 What happens to the both of us when I get to where I can't
4 remember either? You see, that could happen to me. They
5 tell me that Alzheimer's Disease runs in families, so there's
6 more than just a chance that I'll get it. I can tell you
7 that remembering how my grandmother and my great aunt were in
8 their last years, I'm not particularly anxious to live as
9 long as they did if that's what I've got to look forward to.

10 But just say that I do live long enough for me to
11 get totally forgetful. Then we'll both need an escort to get
12 to the doctor's office, and anywhere else we have to go.
13 What happens to us if PennDot has forbidden escorts to ride
14 with us?

15 Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, a lot of
16 our friends, my wife and I are depending on you to keep in
17 place the services that we need. Please don't let us down.
18 Thank you, Charles E. Burrell."

19 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Thank you. Thank you very much. I'd
20 like to thank you for staying and providing Mr. Burrell's
21 testimony. I wanted to mention something. I was looking
22 through proposed regulations, and many of those who have
23 testified about the concern for the quarter-mile rule would
24 be exempted. Many of those who have testified today, some of
25 the things that they mentioned were concerns of those would

1 be exactly the things that would exempt them under the
2 proposed regulations. High crime areas, those who live in
3 high crime areas would not be expected to comply with the
4 quarter-mile rules.

5 Those under the definition of the functionally
6 handicapped, it mentions: "A person can not negotiate a
7 flight of stairs or escalator with ease." Many of those who
8 testified today who said they would have problems with the
9 quarter-mile rule would be exempted from that because it's
10 obvious that they could not negotiate a flight of stairs with
11 ease.

12 "A person cannot board or leave a transit vehicle
13 without ease, readable speed, or without aid from another
14 person." Those are exemptions under -- or fit within the
15 category of "functionally handicapped." So many of those who
16 testified today indicated that, in fact, they would have
17 difficulty being able to get up on a vehicle without some aid
18 from another person. Under the PennDot pole regulations,
19 they would not have to use the vehicle. They would be
20 eligible to continue using the Access Program.

21 I just want to mention that as you look at the
22 regulations. And those of you who will be reviewing them,
23 look at them a little closer in terms of those definitions
24 that are being proposed in the new regs. Thank you.

25 Eileen Potashman, Staff of United Jewish Federation?

1 EILEEN POTASHMAN: Mr. Chairman, Members of the
2 Committee, my name is Eileen Potashman and I'm a social
3 planner at the United Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh,
4 the UJF.

5 Among our constituency of beneficiary and affiliated
6 agencies are seven agencies with primary roles in service
7 delivery to the Jewish elderly.

8 In addition, we hold the adult services Area Agency on
9 Aging contract for services in the fourteenth ward of the City
10 of Pittsburgh. On behalf of my fellow Triple "A"
11 subcontractors, I would like to thank this committee for
12 enabling us to share our views on the 203 Shared Ride Program.

13 A recently completed demographic study of the Jewish
14 population of greater Pittsburgh commissioned by the UJF
15 indicated that twenty-one point six percent (21.6%) of the
16 Jewish population of greater Pittsburgh is age sixty-five or
17 older. Our constituency of older Americans numbers nearly
18 ten thousand (10,000). Of these, some one thousand (1,000)
19 reside in protective, or semi-protective housing. Over
20 two-thirds of our Jewish seniors live in Squirrel Hill,
21 Shadyside, and the surrounding neighborhoods. They live
22 independently in the community, many taking advantage of the
23 vital services of the Jewish Community Center, Jewish Family
24 and Children Service, Montefiore Hospital, National Council
25 of Jewish Women's Counsel Care and Adult Day Care Center, and

1 other supportive services.

2 It is on behalf of the over ten thousand seniors living
3 independently in the community that I address my remarks to
4 you today.

5 We fully support adoption of the quarter-mile rule as
6 amended in the latest draft regulations. The exceptions to
7 this rule take into account the personal safety factors and
8 level of service concerns voiced by our constituents. We
9 believe the regulations as stated will insure quality
10 transportation services to our seniors who need it most,
11 those proudly living alone who need some extra assistance in
12 maintaining their independence.

13 We thank those responsible for these changes for
14 hearing the call of our seniors, and acting in the appropriate
15 manner. We urge you to recommend that escorts accompanying
16 seniors to doctors' appointments be allowed to ride free of
17 charge, providing a physician certifies that an escort is
18 necessary. Requiring escorts to pay for multiple trips when
19 accompanying patients seeking treatment for illnesses
20 requiring chemotherapy and kidney dialysis places an unfair
21 burden on those in the lower income brackets. Clearly, these
22 patients cannot travel alone, yet some may be unable to
23 afford traveling with an escort.

24 While we have no solid figures on the number of
25 community members regularly using escorts, we do have some

1 knowledge of this regulation's impact at the Riverview Center
2 for Jewish Seniors. Ninety percent (90%) of these residents
3 require escorts, eighty percent (80%) of whom are in the lower
4 income brackets. These seniors must be accompanied to the
5 doctor but have little means to pay for this service.

6 On behalf of the hundreds of Medicaid eligible clients
7 in the Jewish community, I must express concern over the
8 transferring of this population's transportation services
9 back to the Department of Public Welfare's transportation
10 system. Most of our clients are unfamiliar with the different
11 systems operating in Allegheny County, and have come to depend
12 upon the quality of Access for their transportation. They
13 feel the DPW's system is already overloaded and will be
14 unable to meet their needs. They find the bureaucratic
15 system of the DPW to be demeaning and degrading. This only
16 exacerbates feelings of anxiety, depression, and
17 worthlessness.

18 One of the major advantages of the shared ride program
19 is that our seniors view this service in a positive light,
20 as a program for their benefit, not as a government handout.

21 We urge you to continue to allow all seniors to ride
22 under Section 203.

23 An alternative approach would be to develop a system for
24 the Medicaid eligible client's rides to be paid for by the
25 Department of Public Welfare with service delivery under the

1 shared ride program. This approach appears to be allowable in
2 the stated regulations.

3 In conclusion, I would like to add that the regulations
4 calling for coordination of services, detailed invoicing, and
5 data collection are most appropriate and should help to curb
6 any abuse of this quality transportation program. Thank you
7 for the opportunity to appear before you today.

8 REPRESENTATIVE NAHILL: Thank you very much. Are there
9 any questions? I'd like to cover one thing if I can.
10 Representative Linton had to leave for a few minutes so I'm
11 substituting for him. I'm not trying to ask his questions,
12 I'm asking only my own. You are the first who has testified
13 today, and I'm hoping with great authority, that you feel that
14 the quarter-mile rule exceptions will permit those that need
15 the exception to get it. Do you see any other factors? Are
16 there any other factors that we should also be considering,
17 or do you feel it's adequate?

18 A I feel that the exceptions, as stated, are adequate.

19 Q Even if we allow a bureaucrat to interpret
20 them?

21 A Well, the question -- the main --

22 Q I'm just concerned that there are some people out
23 there that, you know, that they don't have much of a mind of
24 their own. They want to look at a rule and interpret it
25 literally. And I hope that you've looked at it in that light.

1 A Our main concern is the definition of those
2 exceptions. And one of the questions I would pose is where
3 those -- who is going to define those exceptions? Will it be
4 the local carrier, or will that come out of a state level?
5 And how will our seniors be able to obtain notice that they
6 are exempted on a given day? That is the one concern that we
7 do have about the exceptions, but in principle we agree with
8 what is stated in the regulations.

9 Q Thank you very much, and we will keep our eyes on
10 it. Thank you.

11 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Lena Reagle?

12 LENA REAGLE: My name is Lena Reagle and I live at
13 Morningside.

14 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Okay. Ms. Reagle, could you speak
15 into the other mike?

16 MS. REAGLE: This one?

17 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Yes.

18 MS. REAGLE: Okay. My name is Lena Reagle and I live
19 in Morningside. I work in East Hills Shopping Center. I'm
20 over sixty-five so that I need Access to get me home when I
21 work at nights. It's in an unsafe neighborhood, and I'm
22 really grateful to Access picking me up at the store and
23 taking me home. And that's about all that I want to say. I
24 just hope that you keep Access going so that -- Okay. That's
25 all. Thank you.

1 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Thank you. Rose Lewango, Project
2 Director, Retired Senior Citizens Program, City of
3 Philadelphia? Pittsburgh, I'm sorry. Can't take me out of
4 Philadelphia without me keep thinking of Philadelphia.

5 ROSE LEWANGO: Don't connect me with the "Cemetery of
6 Lights." I started out on the wrong footing, right?

7 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Chairman's going to have to leave
8 with that kind of remark.

9 ROSE LEWANGO: I did that, I wanted to see what your
10 reaction would be. My name is Rose Lewango, I -- Before my
11 retirement I was the Project Director for the Senior Citizens
12 Program for the City of Pittsburgh, Department of Parks and
13 Recreation. For the past thirty years I have been in contact,
14 or worked very closely with all the senior citizen programs
15 in the City of Pittsburgh; worked with other groups also. In
16 fact, I started the first senior citizen's center for the
17 City of Pittsburgh, in Homewood.

18 I would like to talk to you on a different vein. You
19 have heard today everybody express their feelings on Access,
20 why they need it, and what a benefit it is to them, which it
21 is.

22 I would like to talk to you from the standpoint of what
23 it has done to them on a moral standpoint.

24 This is one of the best programs that has ever been
25 established, started, call it what you want, by the

1 government.

2 Our senior citizens are a breed that you'll never see
3 again. They have gone through four wars and one depression.
4 They're survivors. They know how to fight for things, they
5 know how to survive, and they appreciate things. They were
6 taught the difference between right and wrong.

7 What bothers me terribly is we, today, are teaching
8 them other things. Some cities, or some counties, or somebody
9 does something wrong, they don't get punished. Everybody's
10 going to get punished.

11 If you have a sore on your arm, you treat that sore.
12 Correct? You don't cut off the whole arm. Try and explain
13 this to the senior citizens that because somebody misused the
14 services, lied, cheated, call it whatever you want, that they
15 who've kept their 'nose clean' are being punished. It's a
16 little hard to explain to them.

17 Also, why should we in the City of Pittsburgh and
18 Allegheny County -- I'm not saying that all our people are
19 perfect, that they haven't cheated a little or maybe bent a
20 little bit -- But we have set up one of the finest Access
21 programs in the state.

22 You can check and countercheck between the carriers,
23 between the agencies -- Did I say something wrong?

24 CHAIRMAN LINTON: No, you didn't.

25 MS. LEWANGO: I don't know.

1 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Everything's gotten better since your
2 initial comment about the City of Lights. You can keep going.

3 MS. LEWANGO: I thought maybe I said something wrong.
4 Even if I did, I'm telling the truth. There is a good rapport
5 between our carriers, our agencies, and Access. The senior
6 citizens try to stick to the rules and regulations that
7 they're told.

8 By taking any part of Access away from them, you're
9 going to be hurting them considerably because if any of you
10 have dealt with senior citizens, you know that most of
11 them are afraid to go out. Most of them look at the four
12 walls in their room, and believe me, and I say this from
13 experience, if we had had Access four years ago, Allegheny
14 County today wouldn't have to build that many Mini-Cain
15 Hospitals to house the senior citizens that were put there
16 because they stared at four walls, or had nothing to do, or
17 nowhere to go. So Access has given them a sense of
18 independence, has made them feel that they're alive again.

19 I think it's wonderful when a senior citizen saves
20 their money, which they do. They got all little kinds of
21 envelopes, I should know. This -- I'll tell you. Camping,
22 when we had our camping trips in the city, they come back
23 from the camping trip and they'd come up to me, and they'd
24 say, "Rose, I'm starting to save my money for next year to go
25 camping." So they know how to budget and save their little

1 dollars.

2 If they save their money and they want to use Access to
3 go to the beauty parlor, and maybe go to lunch, and maybe
4 shop around, and then go back home, who are we to judge that
5 they shouldn't do that? That may be the only relaxation and
6 recreation that they have.

7 So, I am asking you, and pleading with you, with all of
8 you who have anything to do with this program to please
9 evaluate everything. And don't do what they did several
10 months ago, splash in the newspapers all the changes that were
11 going to be made, excuse the expression, "hell broke loose."
12 And I mean broke loose. People were petrified. They went
13 down to the Access office, they wanted to turn in their
14 tickets. They were afraid they were going to lose their
15 money. They would call the Access office to give them an
16 explanation. Nobody knew when it was going to go into effect.
17 I felt sorry for the carriers. I felt sorry for the Access
18 office and the social agencies that were handling it.

19 And there's another thing that I would appreciate,
20 which may simplify things. If an edict is sent down on
21 something, make sure that everybody within that system gets
22 the same copy so they all know what they're doing, because by
23 the time that Joe Blow tells Susie Q, it's a different color
24 and a different story.

25 So, I know any new program that is started, you will

1 find that there's going to be a few things that go wrong, and
2 we're dealing with human beings. They're bound to cheat here
3 and there. But, please, don't punish the whole -- the whole
4 group.

5 I'm going to give you a good example what Social
6 Security did. Social Security -- I shouldn't bring up Social
7 Security, I know, but I'll give you a very good example.
8 They give the senior citizens social security. Good,
9 wonderful. They put so many strings attached to it so if you
10 get married, they cut your social security. Right? Okay?
11 The senior citizens were the ones that started "shacking up,"
12 so the government -- That's the truth. The government don't
13 know it. I knew it. A lot of my staff knew it, but the
14 government didn't know it. Why do we do this to the senior
15 citizens?

16 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: I bet they've had more fun since
17 then.

18 MS. LEWANGO: Maybe so. But I think we're teaching
19 them -- We're teaching them the tricks of the trade. I mean,
20 we're permitting them to look for avenues so that they can
21 survive.

22 In reference to a -- I heard earlier today, in reference
23 to an income guideline, I personally am not in favor of that
24 because I think a lot of you know, there are people,
25 regardless of their income, who are prisoners in their own

1 homes. And we have to get those people also, and get them
2 out. And if they have the availability of using Access to go
3 to the beauty parlor, go to anywhere, it will get them out of
4 the house and keep them from getting sick.

5 Another thing, the senior citizens programs -- You want
6 any money, just say you're going to give it to the senior
7 citizens, and brother, every politician's there, running to
8 give you whatever you want. It's election year, so fine. So
9 you get that money, so they buy all kinds of free tickets.
10 They give them tickets to go to the opera, they give them
11 tickets to go the symphony, they give them tickets to go on a
12 boat ride, never taking into consideration that these
13 activities are held at night. Without Access the senior
14 citizens wouldn't get there because they will not go out at
15 night, go anywhere at night. They're afraid.

16 Lena did not tell you that she was mugged twice before
17 she got Access. She was going to quit her job. And because
18 of Access she's able to maintain her job. So I think when an
19 evaluation is being done on these programs, please remember
20 we're dealing with human beings. And they may not be able to
21 speak English, they may not be able to read and write English,
22 but the culture and the education that they have, money can't
23 buy. And they can teach all of us a few things.

24 Thank you very much. Please evaluate your program.
25 Thank you.

1 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Thank you. Thank you very much.
2 Gertrude Patty?

3 GERTRUDE PATTY: Mr. Chairman and members of the
4 committee, I'm Gertrude Patty. I live at 736 Rockwood Avenue
5 in Mount Lebanon, Pennsylvania. I'm president of the Western
6 Pennsylvania Legislative Council of the American Association
7 of Retired Persons. I represent some seventy (70) chapters,
8 or approximately thirty thousand (30,000) members in the
9 western Pennsylvania area. Statewide we have a membership of
10 a million, three hundred (1,000,300) people.

11 Because of our age group, we are now one of the greatest
12 participants in the Access Program. The Access Program has
13 been one of the greatest programs that has ever been offered
14 to older people, over sixty-five years of age. Because of the
15 Access Program many have had a whole new world opened up to
16 them. They are able to resume normal living again, such as
17 attending church services, going out socially, doing their
18 own grocery shopping, as well as for the needed professional
19 and medical care appointments. It gives them independence
20 and restores dignity.

21 The lack of personal contact with people causes a
22 breakdown of the mental and the physical well being. This
23 door-to-door transportation certainly costs less than
24 institutionalization.

25 Our organization has certainly seen an increase in our

1 membership since Access came into being. So many older people
2 had to sell their cars, their homes for health reasons. Poor
3 eyesight and the lack of strength to maintain their homes.

4 The quarter-mile regulation does not make any sense at
5 all. There are some older people able to walk that distance,
6 but not the majority. And if they do so, it would be for
7 exercise; but again, they would be in the minority. Carrying
8 groceries, for a person over sixty-five years of age with
9 arthritis, is out of the question.

10 The crime on the streets. You're not safe at any time.
11 Older persons are the main targets of muggers. Ice and snow
12 means older people cannot get out into the winter months at
13 all. Those are the times when older citizens become depressed
14 and the mind starts to slip for a lack of stimulation when
15 people are housebound.

16 So far as sharing rides, we have no -- not a problem
17 with that. Medical escorts must for older persons -- Medical
18 escorts are a must for older persons who are ill.

19 If there is an abuse, there should be some way of
20 checking where the medical appointment is and whether or not
21 the escort remains with the patient. We cannot go along with
22 the idea of the "means test" for the sixty-five plus riders.
23 Who is going to qualify whether people are not -- whether they
24 are eligible or not. It is just going to create more red
25 tape, more payroll, and who gains anything.

1 The Access Sixty-five Plus Program is the only benefit
2 some people have gotten from the lottery fund. I think it is
3 time that they deserve a break, as well as other people. The
4 fund was established for senior citizens, but some of them
5 have never gotten any benefits.

6 For once let's give all of sixty-five years of age a
7 break. We all need this program.

8 Thank you for listening.

9 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Thank you very much. Members of the
10 committee have any questions?

11 (No response.)

12 Thank you very much for your testimony.

13 Iva Rossi, Secretary of Western Pennsylvania Legislative
14 Council?

15 VOICE: She was not able to come today.

16 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Thank you. Sylvia Bell, Upper St.
17 Clair Senior Citizens?

18 SYLVIA BELL: I'm Sylvia Bell, Coordinator of Older
19 Adult Activities of Upper St. Clair Township. I am familiar
20 with Access because I've been taking applications for Access
21 in Upper St. Clair since the inception of the program, and
22 have arranged transportation through Access for approximately
23 nine months for the United Senior Citizens of Upper St. Clair.

24 As anyone who works with senior citizens knows, one of
25 their major problems is transportation. Many people who have

1 never driven, or can no longer drive, are isolated, and
2 therefore, unable to enjoy the very fine opportunities
3 available to them. They are dependent upon friends and
4 family for necessary transportation.

5 Access has made it possible for many senior citizens to
6 expand their horizons, and has made their lives enriched.
7 Yes, Access funding is limited; therefore, it is necessary
8 to use the funding as economical as possible so that it can
9 serve as many people as possible.

10 The new regulations are fair and equitable, if these new
11 rules are needed to prevent continued abuse of this system.

12 We want to maximize the service already provided.
13 Currently, Access is available to people based on age, not
14 necessarily economic need. Therefore, I feel certain items
15 in the proposal need further examination.

16 First, airport transportation. Many people apply for
17 Access because they want to go to the airport, and plan to
18 only use this service. They are either visiting family, or
19 engaged in one of the pleasures of retirement, travel. I
20 feels these trips should not be eliminated, and it should be
21 convenient to use Access for airport transportation even if
22 the riders need to pay full fare for part of the trip.

23 Secondly, the quarter-mile rule needs further
24 examination. Bad weather and dangerous neighborhoods are
25 taken into consideration in the proposal; however, darkness

1 isn't. Darkness creates problems for older people. Many are
2 afraid to venture out in neighborhoods not considered
3 dangerous. In addition, many people who can drive during the
4 day cannot drive at night, and need Access transportation
5 only at night.

6 A free ride is more appealing to most senior citizens,
7 and would themselves chose a bus or trolley before paying for
8 transportation. Therefore, a more lenient Access rule should
9 take into consideration darkness, as well as the other
10 proposals in the quarter-mile rule. Because there are so
11 many enriching lectures, symphonies, plays, and varied
12 activities that are only available at night, Access is the
13 key to senior citizen's participation.

14 I would like to compliment those who authored the new
15 proposal for Access for the one month lead time for the
16 adoption of changes. It assures a smoother transition which
17 is much less frustrating to all involved.

18 In conclusion, I feel the rules are needed and are as
19 fair as possible under the circumstances; that they allow for
20 the most economical use of the lottery funds and the most
21 benefit to all senior citizens.

22 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Thank you. Questions from members of
23 the committee?

24 (No response.)

25 I'd just like to take this time, I think I was remiss

1 in not recognizing Mr. William Underwood from the Department
2 of Transportation who's been here today, throughout our
3 deliberations, and listening to various comments and input
4 that's being made about the proposed regulations.

5 Mr. Underwood.

6 Mrs. Linda Orr, Vice-president Pennsylvania Adult Day
7 Care Association.

8 LINDA ORR: I will try to be brief. I know it's late
9 and everybody's getting hungry and tired.

10 I want to say as a consumer, as a social service
11 professional that has been a consumer of Access, which is the
12 procedure for providing para-transit transportation in
13 Allegheny County, that I am new to Pennsylvania in the last
14 two years from your neighboring state of Ohio. And I have to
15 say in my twenty years of social service, I have never seen a
16 program that is run and managed as well as the Access Program
17 is here in Allegheny County.

18 I feel I just have to say that with absolutely nothing
19 to gain by it, other than I think you should know if things
20 are bad, people here; and when things are good, sometimes they
21 don't. And that maybe if a model such as the one that's being
22 presently used in Allegheny County were really looked at as a
23 statewide model, it may really work.

24 So I think I have to just say that quickly and then go
25 on because my remarks are going to be as vice president of

1 the Pennsylvania Adult Day Care Association, which is a
2 statewide organization of providers and concerned individuals
3 interested in planning and providing quality day care service
4 to the elderly and the handicapped in Pennsylvania.

5 Adult day care is a new phenomena on the block -- the
6 new kid on the block in terms of geriatric care, but it is
7 coming on strong. And I guess that I want to make a generic
8 plea, I'm not going to go through the regulations one by one
9 because I don't think you need to hear any more today.

10 But I think by the very fact that a person is enrolled
11 in an adult day care program makes them a high priority for
12 the para-transit system. And that any of the cuts that have
13 been proposed, and any of regulations that make it cumbersome
14 and bureaucratic for them to use, I just feel that we have to
15 eliminate that.

16 And we have to plead generically that those clients that
17 attend adult day care centers throughout the state of
18 Pennsylvania, whether they be centers sponsored by the Area
19 Agency on Aging or the private provider, such as my agency
20 which is located at the Jewish Home for the Aged and is a
21 private day care center, that clients should not have
22 to worry about the quarter-mile rule, about cumbersome
23 formats for becoming classified as functionally disabled.
24 The very fact that they're in adult day care, I think, says
25 that for itself.

1 That the distance rule should not be considered. We
2 have people coming from Upper St. Clair into Squirrel Hill,
3 which is a long way. But we are the only ethnic Jewish adult
4 day care center in the Allegheny area. We have other adult
5 day care centers that provide specific kinds of services, and
6 people should not be limited by the distance.

7 The escorts are a must for many of our people. The
8 transportation system might as well not be if they can't have
9 an escort along with them.

10 I guess I have to say as a newcomer to the state of
11 Pennsylvania, I have -- was just most impressed by what the
12 lottery money is being used for in this state in terms of a
13 para-transit system for the elderly. I've always believed
14 that civilizations, and states, and cities, and politicians
15 should be judged on how well they provide humane services for
16 the elderly, for the handicapped, for the poor.

17 Maybe I sound like a bleeding heart liberal. I'm
18 really not. I just think we have to really take a good hard
19 look at that, and I just encourage you at whatever level you
20 can to save this system, to build it. Don't cut it. It's
21 the best thing you have going in the state of Pennsylvania.

22 Your Steelers aren't doing too good this year. And so,
23 let's really --

24 MR. CASPER: The Eagles beat the Redskins and the
25 Cardinals.

1 MS. ORR: That's right. Well, I'm a Browns fan from
2 Ohio and I can't really help it. But --

3 MR. CASPER: You know the Eagles, they're in the
4 territory where all the Access shared ride program abuses
5 occur.

6 MS. ORR: Is that right?

7 MR. CASPER: In the eastern part of the state.

8 MS. ORR: Well, I can tell you we love Pennsylvania.
9 And I just think that it's a wonderful thing you have going
10 here. Try to save it at whatever level you can. Thank you.

11 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Thank you very much. Ms. Orr, before
12 you sit down I had a question.

13 A Yes?

14 Q Does the day care facility, particularly the one in
15 St. Clair that you made reference to, do you provide third
16 party reimbursement?

17 A No, we don't. We are a private, non-profit day
18 care center that is not considered part of the Triple "A"
19 network. Consequently, our riders buy their own tickets, and
20 they're not provided free as they are for adult day care
21 people coming to the Triple "A" centers. It's a beef of
22 mine, as a matter of fact, that they are over sixty-five, and
23 that if they go to a Triple "A" center they get their tickets
24 free. And if they come to private centers they don't. And
25 that's something I think we have to resolve. And just as we

1 were starting to talk to the Area Agency on Aging about the
2 private providers being able to take part in this, the whole
3 uproar started with the changes and cuts. And we just kind of
4 shelved it for the present. But it's certainly an issue with
5 me. Okay?

6 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Thank you.

7 MS. ORR: Thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Francis Kreiner, Westmoreland County
9 Taxi Cab Association?

10 FRANK TRAGONA: Well, it's early evening so I guess
11 "good afternoon, gentlemen" is definitely out. My name is
12 Frank Tragona. That's Mr. Kreiner, this is Mr. Weaver. We
13 represent a group of concerned carriers who have been
14 providers of transportation service for Pennsylvania lottery's
15 funded 203 Program in Westmoreland County.

16 Since May 20th of this year when Westmoreland County
17 Transit Authority became the coordinator, difficulties have
18 surfaced.

19 Originally, the intent of the 203 Program was to
20 provide mobility for the senior citizens with dignity and
21 independence through private transportation providers.

22 We, as providers of 203 transportation service in
23 Westmoreland County, are concerned about the reprisal that
24 may be taken against us. It is apparent that Westmoreland
25 County Transit Authority is, in fact, a dictatorship, not a

1 coordinator of 203 transportation services.

2 Their main concern is not with the senior citizens as
3 riders.

4 It has been stated by Westmoreland County Transit
5 Authority Director, that, quote:

6 "We don't owe these people anything."

7 Since coordination, the service to senior citizens has been
8 restricted and at an increased cost. The coordination between
9 Westmoreland County and private carriers is not working.

10 At the present time, in Westmoreland County, nineteen
11 cents (\$.19) of every dollar received by Westmoreland County
12 Transit Authority is expended for the administration of 203
13 service without a resulting increase in ridership. It should
14 be noted that before Westmoreland County Transit Authority,
15 the administrative costs were absorbed by the carriers.

16 Now, however, there is a duplication of services.
17 As an example, at the present time, with only six
18 non-overlapping carriers, implementation of phase one in
19 Westmoreland County already has six full time dispatchers,
20 two full time accountants, two full time secretaries, one
21 coordinator, and one executive director.

22 The question arises as to how much additional staff will
23 be needed to implement phase two and three.

24 Again, illustrating the high cost of coordination in
25 Westmoreland County, twelve Westmoreland County Transit

1 Authority personnel are needed to administer the transport of
2 approximately ten thousand (10,000) trips per month. Whereas,
3 Allegheny County is now administering, through Access, one
4 hundred thousand (100,000) trips per month with a staff of
5 only twenty to twenty-five.

6 The coordinator, Westmoreland County Transit Authority,
7 has recently received a fare increase. The proceeds of this
8 increase were not passed on to the providers who are still
9 not covering their costs under the present contract. The
10 increase is in addition to the nineteen percent (19%) already
11 retained by Westmoreland County Transit Authority from the
12 providers.

13 In reference to the quarter-mile rule, we oppose this
14 regulation. There isn't anyone here who would let their
15 mother or father walk a quarter-mile if they didn't want to.

16 PennDot feels the shared ride program is taking
17 passengers away from the fixed route systems, which they
18 subsidize. The taxi industry is the only form of
19 transportation not subsidized by local, state, or federal
20 money. We're not getting rich, at least I'm not. We are
21 providing a service at a fair price.

22 We are concerned that any attempts to divert direct
23 funding from 203 providers may result in decreased service
24 and efficiency to the program.

25 We have heard of a proposal that 203 funds be channeled

1 through the county block grant program, and we agreed with
2 this idea entirely -- We disagree with this. We disagree with
3 this idea entirely, yes. For sure.

4 Westmoreland County Transit Authority, in the opinion
5 of the providers, is a biased coordinator for the simple fact
6 that they actually control a fixed route system. They are
7 not impartial, nor are they qualified. And most of all, they
8 are not cost effective to administer the reduced fare shared
9 ride program in Westmoreland County.

10 We, as providers, are not against regulation. But not
11 all coordinators are equal. Empire building and bureaucracy
12 cost money. Funds received from the 203 Program should only
13 be used to move people. Senior citizens are people. People
14 who need and want this service, and who have come to depend on
15 it.

16 Gentlemen, thank you for your time. If you have any
17 questions, please.

18 CHAIRMAN LINTON: I have a couple questions that I'd
19 like to get started with. Isn't that the ninety percent
20 (90%) reimbursement from the lottery fund to the taxi
21 providers a subsidy?

22 MR. WEAVER: No, it's no subsidy. We're doing a
23 service for a price. It's not a subsidy.

24 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Okay.

25 MR. KREINER: I think what he's trying to say, that we

1 own the equipment.

2 MR. CASPER: Excuse me. For the reporters, it might be
3 helpful if you mentioned your name and gave your statement.

4 MR. KREINER: My name is Francis Kreiner. And we own
5 the equipment and -- we have the dispatch the offices and
6 all. Whereas, the bus companies have 406 money, federal
7 subsidies, and everything. I think, you know, all we're
8 providing is a service for a fixed cost. We don't believe
9 that we're being subsidized directly. We're not -- no.
10 We're private carriers.

11 CHAIRMAN LINTON: I understand. In the first statement
12 -- or your first statement you made reference to that the
13 intent of the 203 Program was to provide through private
14 transportation providers.

15 A Yes. I feel that was the intent of the 203 Program.
16 Am I correct.

17 Q No, that was not the intent. The legislation, to
18 my knowledge, did not intend or specify private transportation
19 providers.

20 MR. WEAVER: Could I answer that question?

21 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Yes, sir.

22 MR. WEAVER: At the time this program was implemented
23 -- I don't talk too good, I've had a broken jaw. But the
24 time this program was instigated, the municipal governments,
25 Pittsburgh --

1 MR. CASPER: Excuse me, sir. Did you mention your name?

2 MR. WEAVER: Ralph Weaver. At the time this program
3 was implemented, the private carrier could not apply for a
4 grant for a period of two years. The municipal governments,
5 and your transit authorities could apply for your
6 transportations at incepta in Philadelphia, got their money
7 right away. But the taxi companies or private carriers had to
8 wait two years before they applied for this program.

9 This was the first time that the private carrier had
10 really got a break out of the government. At the time we got
11 this, you know, you might say it's a subsidy; but it was a
12 'shot in the arm' to private industry. But, whenever they got
13 the -- The local governments, your local transit authorities,
14 threatened you, "If you don't sign my contract, I'm going to
15 see that you're out of business."

16 Whenever you go through this stuff, which we've had in
17 Westmoreland County, Westmoreland County -- The Director of
18 Westmoreland County Transit Authority has made a statement
19 that if Mr. Weaver does not sign our contract, we'll put him
20 out of business. Well, I don't intend to be put out of
21 business. Thank you.

22 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Excuse me. Has Westmoreland County
23 just recently, as of May 20th, begun coordination?

24 MR. TRAGONA: Yes. In May 20th Westmoreland County
25 Transit Authority took over as coordinator for the 203

1 Program.

2 Q Was there a coordinator in that area prior to May
3 20th?

4 MR. WEAVER: Could I answer that? There is about --
5 This is Ralph Weaver again. There is about ten carriers,
6 private carriers, in Westmoreland County. I think about
7 seven of us had the 203 grants. Now we're not working
8 overlapping territories, we're not competing with one another.
9 Now, I don't see why, if you're not overlapping, you're not
10 competing with each other, why you need somebody to tell you
11 what to do. The coordinator is answering the telephone,
12 given the calls. It costs them nineteen cents on a dollar
13 for them to answer that telephone to get that call.

14 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Okay.

15 MR. WEAVER: Before the coordinator we all answered our
16 phones, coordinated our trips, and I think we give a good
17 service.

18 CHAIRMAN LINTON: It's interesting. My understanding
19 of the Access Program, even though the PAT is providing the
20 coordination, it's my understanding that the individual
21 provider still, for the most part, handle the individual
22 operation of their systems.

23 MR. WEAVER: Well, in Westmoreland County they take all
24 the calls. They tell the people where they can go. If the
25 county don't feel that that person should go there, they

1 don't give me the trip.

2 MR. TRAGONA: It should be noted that the Transit
3 Authority in Westmoreland County does not necessarily follow
4 the guidelines that have been sent down by PennDot. They
5 decide when senior citizens may ride under the 203 Program,
6 at what times of the day they may ride, where, how, whether
7 they should take the bus. And also, there's no Saturday
8 service in areas where there was before. Before Westmoreland
9 County took over senior citizens were able to call any 203
10 provider from six in the morning till midnight the day before
11 to make a reservation. Calls now, under the Authority, are
12 only taken from 8:30 to 2:30, if you can get through.

13 The next thing is that no senior citizen will ride in
14 Westmoreland County under the 203 Program after the time of
15 8:00 o'clock.

16 Now, those are some of the guidelines that have been set
17 up by the Authority, all right? I don't think 203, when it
18 was implemented, I don't know if other parts of the state have
19 these guidelines. And for this reduced service to the senior
20 citizens, the state is now incurring nineteen cents cost out
21 of every dollar that is funneled into Westmoreland County for
22 203.

23 It should be noted that Westmoreland County Transit
24 Authority has applied to PennDot for a fare increase for the
25 carriers. Along with the fare increase they were looking to

1 have their percentage raised from nineteen percent to
2 twenty-two point seven (22.7%).

3 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Now, you say they have applied for a
4 fare increase, but you mentioned in your testimony they have
5 received a fare increase.

6 MR. TRAGONA: They -- It has come back from PennDot
7 that Westmoreland County Transit Authority shall receive
8 fifty cents per trip for themselves, in addition to the
9 nineteen percent to administer the program. It was noted
10 from PennDot that no increase could be provided to the
11 providers of the service until further documentation is
12 received.

13 We have been swamped with paperwork since Westmoreland
14 County Transit Authority has taken over.

15 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Okay. Just a minute now, I want to
16 be clear on this. They have received a fifty cent per ride
17 increase?

18 A Yes.

19 Q In addition to the nineteen cents that they
20 currently receive for administrative costs. So you're saying
21 they now have sixty-nine cents (\$.69) per ride which they can
22 keep for their administrative costs?

23 A Yes.

24 Q And operating the program?

25 A Yes. That has just come back from Harrisburg

1 within the last week.

2 MR. KREINER: Excuse me, it's Frank Kreiner again.
3 It's nineteen percent of whatever the ride is. If it --

4 MR. TRAGONA: Yes. It's still nineteen percent on --
5 nineteen cents on every dollar. Not nineteen cents per ride,
6 nineteen percent. I thought I made that clear.

7 MR. KREINER: But the fifty cents, when that came back,
8 that's per person, per trip.

9 MR. TRAGONA: Yes.

10 MR. KREINER: Not another fifty percent on top of that.

11 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Thank you. I would --

12 MR. WEAVER: Can I say one other thing, please?

13 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Yes, you may, and then I'll pass the
14 mike to Representative Nahill.

15 MR. WEAVER: I operate a taxi company in a three county
16 area, Washington County, Fayette County, and Westmoreland
17 County. Now if we are -- If this coordination is forced on
18 us, I am going to have to work three transit authorities to
19 provide a service.

20 That means I would have to keep three sets of books,
21 answer three masters, which I don't think is possible.

22 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Thank you. Representative Nahill?

23 REPRESENTATIVE NAHILL: Gordon, I was just going to
24 ask, maybe we could ask Bill Underwood to take a look at
25 this, and see what the story is, and see if we can get a

1 report back on what's happening in Westmoreland County.

2 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Yes. Mr. Underwood, we would like if
3 we could get some information on the Westmoreland County
4 coordination project for the Committee. It's unfortunate
5 that we do not have a representative today from Westmoreland
6 County.

7 MR. CASPER: As you gentlemen probably know,
8 Representative Amos Hutchinson, the chairman of our committee,
9 is from Greensburg.

10 MR. TRAGONA: Yes.

11 MR. CASPER: Westmoreland County, representing
12 Greensburg and the Hempfield Township area. And he is
13 concerned about your problem. I remember one day, as I heard
14 often during the day, he'd be here at the office with
15 Representative Gordon Linton would come in and talk about
16 this 203 problem. Amos's response was sympathetic, but I
17 guess he considered it an eastern problem, per se, as I heard
18 him comment often. All of sudden when I was in the office
19 with him working a little later, he got a phone call that was
20 a problem with taxi cab service providing a 203 service in
21 Westmoreland County.

22 MR. TRAGONA: Well, we had talked to Amos on that, and
23 basically our conversation with him on his front porch a few
24 weeks ago was, "Amos, the Transit Authority is running rough
25 shod over the taxi cab organizations in this area, and there

1 is absolutely nothing we can seem to do about it. It's kind
2 of like, "if you don't like it get the hell out of the
3 business 'cause we're doing what we want." We have gone to
4 meetings, we've met with their directors. We've had
5 attorneys, we've talked to them. We have gotten absolutely
6 nowhere. Our next move was to see Amos. And Amos advised us
7 to come down here and talk to you people because it doesn't
8 seem like anybody is really aware of what's going on in
9 Westmoreland County.

10 Maybe people don't care. We care. We have a sizable
11 investment in all of our businesses. When you have somebody
12 that has no investment coming into an area with tax dollars
13 that I have used, and paid those taxes with my investment,
14 and he tells me that if I don't go along with his program, if
15 I don't go by his raise, that I won't be in business next
16 year, And I'm talking businesses that are worth at this
17 time, maybe in excess of a half a million dollars. And I'm
18 looking at next year not being in business? I don't sleep
19 very well at night. And I don't think anybody else will. I
20 just don't see where this can happen.

21 MR. CASPER: Excuse me. When you're saying "he,"
22 "he," you're referring to the Westmoreland County Transit
23 Authority?

24 MR. TRAGONA: Well, I'm talking about the director,
25 yes. Yes.

1 MR. CASPER: I just wanted to make that very clear,
2 number one.

3 MR. TRAGONA: Well, you have a tendency to pick out
4 somebody in particular.

5 MR. CASPER: Well, sure. I just wanted to make sure
6 the pronoun was allied to the proper person. I also wanted
7 to mention another thing, too. In addition to Amos mentioning
8 that you gentlemen come down here today and put your problems
9 on the record, he also instructed me very carefully to take
10 heed of what you say, and come back and huddle with him. So,
11 you know Amos's motes operendi. He's a very direct
12 individual, he doesn't stand on too many formalities. He
13 tends to cut to the quick. And I think I'm phrasing it very
14 politely, but he usually takes care of things that other
15 people may tend to shy away from. And I get the feeling
16 that, you know, he's very much interested in your problems.

17 MR. TRAGONA: I agree with you.

18 MR. CASPER: Thank you very much.

19 MR. TRAGONA: Thank you.

20 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Thank you. I think what appears to
21 be our final witness? Doug Turner and Al Hayes, President of
22 the Pennsylvania Taxi Cab and Para-transit Association, and
23 Mr. Hayes from the Yellow Cab Company of Pittsburgh.

24 MR. TURNER: I'd also like to have Mr. Canalis up here
25 please.

1 BY MR. DOUGLAS TURNER: Good afternoon, my name is
2 Douglas Turner. I am the President of the Pennsylvania
3 Taxi Cab and Para-transit Association, as well as the General
4 Manager and Secretary Treasurer of the People's Cab Company,
5 here in Pittsburgh.

6 With me here today, to my right is Mr. Albert Hays, Vice
7 President of the Yellow Cab Company of Pittsburgh, and Mr.
8 William Canalis to my left, President of the Colonial Taxi
9 Company of Bethel Park. Both of these gentlemen are also
10 Directors of our State-wide Association, and will assist me in
11 answering any of your questions following our presentation.

12 The Pennsylvania Taxi Cab and Para-transit Association,
13 "PTPA," an Association that represents taxi cab and para-
14 transit transportation companies, within this Commonwealth,
15 has, as members, a number of service providers for
16 participating in Pennsylvania's lottery funded 203 program;
17 which provides, reduced fare shared by transportation services
18 for persons sixty-five (65) years of age and older.

19 In Allegheny County, the 203 program is both a vital and
20 integral part of the access transportation system, which
21 provides transportation services to a variety of agencies and
22 users through the coordination of fourteen (14) service
23 providers. Five (5) of those participating companies are
24 members of the PTPA, and thus have an active interest in what
25 occurs here in Allegheny County, as well as the rest of the

1 state. I might make note right now, that some of the members
2 from the Westmoreland County group, are also members of our
3 State-wide association.

4 Recent attempts by PennDot, who administers the 203
5 program, to change aspects of the program, and thus curtail
6 service, will negatively impact all of the service providers
7 as well as the senior citizen riders for whom this program
8 was created.

9 The PTPA, therefore, strongly recommends action on these
10 six (6) specific points, which will allow this viable social
11 program to continue on an effective basis.

12 First: the quarter-mile or thirteen twenty rule, as
13 some of the people in PennDot call it, must be eliminated
14 outright. Mandatory usage of mass transit transportation by
15 feeble elderly, who can barely traverse from their home to
16 the shared ride vehicle at curb side, is both unenforceable
17 and an unjustifiable constraint on the senior citizen
18 population.

19 The effects of security, weather conditions, packages
20 and required doctors forms; compound what would already have
21 become a major hardship for these persons, and will thus
22 result in the disgrace of an otherwise effective and life
23 sustaining social program.

24 Second: third party sponsorship must be permitted --
25 permitted. With PennDot requiring both a qualification by

1 and the written approvals from the Area Agency on Aging,
2 Triple "A" on a County level, rather than the outright
3 elimination of all agencies other than Triple "A." This
4 inclusion of eligible third party sponsorship, would maintain
5 the high efficiency and excellent level of transportation
6 service currently being provided with these participating
7 agencies.

8 Third: the maximum reimbursement for eligible senior
9 citizen trip, should not exceed twenty-seven dollars (\$27.00)
10 based on a State-wide thirty dollar (\$30.00) fare limitation,
11 with the exception that medical trips, over that amount, would
12 be subject to approval by a qualifying agency.

13 Fourth: legislation should be enacted, allowing for a
14 stepped reduction in the fare reimbursement, based on overall
15 program growth.

16 The legislators should be advised that the 203 program
17 is growing rapidly, and the lottery fund should not be
18 diverted to other uses. As well as necessary budgeting, needs
19 to be provided for the continued increase in ridership of the
20 program. A reimbursement criteria with trigger mechanisms,
21 must be established which would automatically reduce the
22 State share by five percent (5%) with each as yet to be
23 determined, percentage increase in program expenses. With
24 each decrease by the Commonwealth, the result rising
25 co-payment would have a natural limited -- natural limitation

1 influence regarding program utilization. One only needs to
2 briefly compare the program costs before and after July 1,
3 1984, that increase in reimbursement from seventy-five
4 (75%) to ninety (90%) percent, in order to comprehend what
5 balancing effect a reversal of that action might have on the
6 program budget.

7 Fifth: coordination would be required for those
8 regions with four (4) or more overlapping and participating
9 private carriers, subject to the protection of present PUC
10 certified taxi cab and para-transit operators, who have
11 shared ride tariffs.

12 The coordination must be cost effective and be
13 administered by a qualified and impartial non-provider
14 of transportation services. We have determined that less
15 than four (4) participating private carriers would not be
16 economical in that it would become too much of a financial
17 burden for the County and each of the providers to maintain
18 the administration and operation of the coordinated system.

19 We are concerned with who will pay for the
20 administration and the coordination, and at what price.

21 Sixth: legislation should be enacted for the provision
22 of funding to sufficiently meet the cost of administration,
23 verification and enforcement incurred by PennDot, or whomever
24 the controlling agency would be.

25 Additionally, two other matters that causes concern is

1 the proposal of allocation of 203 monies through County block
2 grants, and the general attitude of PennDot in administering
3 this program.

4 We are aware that there is an effort to muster support
5 for transferring both the monies and some of the
6 administration of the program over to counties via the block
7 grants. We are opposed to this for two reasons.

8 First, the cost of administration might be greater than
9 the benefits expected.

10 Second, the potential that lottery funds might be
11 diverted to support other county programs that have absolutely
12 nothing to do with transportation services is a very rar --
13 very realistic threat that also must be considered.

14 County programs should also undergo the same auditing
15 procedures that private operators have been experiencing. I
16 add that in because I'm -- I must stop right now and make a
17 note of something. You've heard earlier today from someone
18 who represented Somerset County. You've heard earlier from
19 the representatives from Westmoreland County. PennDot had
20 undergone a series of audits of private operators in this
21 State.

22 There has not yet been an audit, an accountability of
23 the County Transit Authorities in this State, and we have been
24 made aware that there have been abuses by the County Transit
25 Authorities.

1 We feel that you, as legislators, should indeed look
2 into this situation.

3 Regarding PennDot's attitude toward this whole program;
4 we are concerned that their attention may be focused more on
5 the overall cost of this program, rather than providing
6 transportation services for the senior citizens of this
7 Commonwealth. We point out that PennDot has recently issued
8 its final revision of the regulations without allowing
9 for the proper input that is generated from these State-wide
10 hearings.

11 These new regulations are nothing more than essentially
12 a warmed over version of the prior guidelines, which the PTPA
13 opposes those prior guidelines.

14 We support House Bill 1771, which some of you gentlemen
15 here today have co-signed or co-sponsored, a bill which
16 freezes this program for a period of at least one year under
17 the guidelines, prior to July 31, 1984. We support that move.

18 REPRESENTATIVE CASPER: Excuse me, I'm sorry to
19 interrupt you, it sounds like House Bill 1707. Senator
20 Maynard's -- Merry's?

21 MR. TURNER: There are twenty-one (21) or twenty-two
22 (22) sponsors in that bill?

23 REPRESENTATIVE CASPER: Yes.

24 MR. TURNER: Okay, my apologies, then 1707?

25 REPRESENTATIVE CASPER: The provision is that

1 guidelines in effect for programs of this paragraph meeting
2 or 203 program on July 31, 1985, shall continue in effect to
3 remain unchanged for a period of at least one (1) year, is
4 that what ...?

5 MR. TURNER: That is the -- that is the House Bill I
6 am referring to.

7 REPRESENTATIVE CASPER: Sorry to interrupt you, I
8 just wanted to make that clear - House Bill 1707.

9 MR. TURNER: Okay, well I -- okay 1707, I thank you
10 for the clarification.

11 The reason we support that is is that we understand the
12 intent of that piece of legislation. By freezing the program
13 at prior levels, it allows you gentlemen the ability to go
14 back and review this program, and we support a complete review
15 of this program including the administration by PennDot, so
16 that a solution to any problems with this program may truly be
17 found and the longevity of this program can be assured.

18 These actions, when implemented, would indeed allow
19 the continued participation by the taxi cab and para-transit
20 operators of Pennsylvania. Inclusion of eligible third party
21 sponsorship would maintain the efficiency and overall level
22 of services currently provided.

23 Expense limitations and cost effectiveness are desirable
24 objectives that the PTPA understands and supports. However, no
25 one, no one must lose sight of the original intent of this

1 program to provide reduced fare shared ride transportation for
2 senior citizens; to implement certain restrictions and
3 unjustified limitations which would severely hamper the
4 usefulness of this program is foolish, as well as
5 contemptuous, of the needs of the senior citizens of this
6 Commonwealth. They deserve better treatment and so do we.
7 Thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Thank you gentlemen. Any questions?
9 Representative Lloyd.

10 BY REPRESENTATIVE LLOYD:

11 Q A couple questions. One, am I right, the law that
12 we passed a couple years ago which raised from seventy-five
13 percent (75%) to ninety percent (90%), the State reimbursement
14 for demand responsive transportation, that same legislation
15 raised from seventy-five percent (75%) to ninety percent
16 (90%) State reimbursement for certain transportation and mass
17 transit systems, am I right about that?

18 A Bill? I do not know sir.

19 Q Well, I think I am, and I think that I -- I think
20 that if we looked at that legislation we would find that far,
21 far, far and away the primary beneficiaries from that bill
22 were the mass transit authorities in the urban areas, and as
23 what was called by one of the people who opposed the Bill on
24 the House floor, a sob to those of us rural in areas a rural
25 legislator asserted an amendment on the House floor which did

1 stay in the Bill through the legislation process, to go from
2 the seventy-five percent (75%) to ninety percent (90%).

3 The problem that I have with your position, is that by
4 going back to twenty-five percent (25%), what you are doing
5 is taking money, and I don't know if -- apparently you were
6 here earlier today, because you made a reference to my County
7 -- so you must have heard their description of what would
8 happen if we went back to the seventy-five percent (75%).

9 They are currently taking money out of their senior
10 citizen block grant money that they get from the lottery, the
11 Triple "A," has nothing to do with transportation, which they
12 have * the latitude which they may use part of that for
13 transportation, and that's the money that they're using to pay
14 their share.

15 Now, if they have to pay less in order to provide the
16 service, it's possible for them to provide more riders more
17 line, more run in a particular period of time. To hire more
18 people to operate vans; and there's another State program that
19 provides money to help buy those vans.

20 And, so what you're doing, if you go back to
21 seventy-five percent (75%), is that you are taking money away
22 in rural Counties, and I don't understand why, in order to
23 solve whatever the problems -- if we look at the amount of
24 money the State of Pennsylvania spends on mass transportation,
25 and whether it be fixed route or demand response, when we get

1 down the -- on a per capita basis, I feel very safe in saying
2 that the lion's share of that is spent in urban areas, and
3 I don't understand why to solve a -- whatever this budget
4 problem is that the administration thinks it has -- that the
5 way to solve that has to be on the backs of rural people.
6 And, I don't understand why you feel that you have to advocate
7 that.

8 A Let me point out something to you. In a lot of the
9 rural areas of this country, the only transportation systems
10 that are provided in many of the areas of this country and in
11 the State, are provided by private operators. By taxi cab
12 and para-transit companies.

13 Q That's correct.

14 A We have proposed a stepped reduction. We're not
15 saying that we want to go back to a twenty-five percent
16 (25%), you know back to a seventy-five (75) twenty-five (25)
17 right now.

18 Q You want to go further than that. Why are we
19 not, if we need to save money, why are we not taking money
20 away from the senior citic -- the money that State gives to
21 let senior citizens ride on ride on PAT; why don't they
22 have to give up something, why do my constituents have to be
23 the ones to sacrifice. To me, that's not fair, if that's
24 where you propose to have the cut come. I don't understand
25 why?

1 A Sir, this is a State-wide cut.

2 Q Yeah, but it's the State-wide cut that is going to
3 have a disproportionate impact in those areas of the State,
4 which by your very testimony you have indicated have no other
5 choice, and I just -- you know we can argue that until the
6 cows come home, but I just -- to me that is -- that is
7 unfair; that's what's been wrong with the mass transit
8 programs in this State up to now, and coming from a rural
9 area I certainly can't support going backwards, which is
10 where I think you want to go.

11 Now, you also proposed something that's going to
12 cost money, I think. And, that is that you want to liberalize
13 the third party reimbursement. Why do you want to do that?

14 A Sir, in Allegheny County, as an example, there are
15 about sixty-five (65) participating agencies that are agencies
16 that utilize service in Allegheny County.

17 If you go back and you removed every one of those other
18 agencies, and you can refer back later to testimony from the
19 Port Authority, and you gentlemen can later speak with
20 representatives from Port Authority, as well as Access; if you
21 remove those other participating agencies, the overall
22 efficiency of the program is going to be removed. It's going
23 to drop.

24 When you combine other agencies, what you're doing is,
25 instead of having one vehicle do trip A and another vehicle

1 do trip B and another that does trip C, and these are all
2 people going from the same basic area to the same basic area.
3 Your efficiency of the overall operation is much better if you
4 put those three people in one vehicle and send it. This is
5 what Access has done in Allegheny County. It has taken these
6 various agencies and put them together and made it a very
7 cost effective program.

8 What we are asking is that, if Triple "A" has been
9 proposed as the only agency under PennDot's latest revisions,
10 we're asking that that be broadened so that those other
11 agencies be approved by Triple "A," to keep the efficiency --

12 A You talking about Governmental agencies only, or
13 are you talking about private businesses and the like?

14 MR. HAYS: What he's speaking of, I'll give you an
15 example --

16 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Would you identify yourself for the
17 record.

18 MR. HAYS: Yes, I am Mr. Hays. What he is speaking
19 of, approved third party funding, are approved by Triple "A,"
20 Lutheran Service Society, Salvation Army, people of this type.

21 BY REPRESENTATIVE LLOYD:

22 Q We're not talking then about these cases that Don
23 Brian was referring to where people are going out in the
24 street and huckstering, want to go to the zoo; you're not
25 talking about that?

1 A Definitely not. And, it must be approved by
2 Triple "A."

3 Q Okay, all right.

4 BY MR. CANALIS:

5 A Currently, to my understanding, there are agencies
6 outside of Triple "A"'s which are approved by the department
7 for third party

8 Q All right, as long as your talking about
9 governmental agencies, or social service agencies, that's a
10 different matter, although I may still have some concerns
11 about the kindsof trips they're taking. You know, whether we
12 want to -- whether we're going to do essential services, or
13 whether we're going to do things that are not.

14 BY BILL CONOUCH:

15 A I'm Bill Conouch from Colonial Taxi, in Bethel
16 Park. Usually, as for example here in Allegheny County, we
17 service approximately seventeen (17) different non-profit
18 social service agencies, which taken to be, comes under -- at
19 one time or another -- under the umbrella of the Triple "A"'s,
20 and those are the agencies that we refer to when we refer to
21 in this particular program.

22 Q All right. I understand now. My final comment
23 is, I'm a little sick and tired of hearing this stuff going
24 around about a program abuse in Somerset County. Now, I
25 understand from talking to people from my County who were

1 here today, that what they were doing, they had discussed
2 with the Department of Transportation and told they were to
3 go ahead and do that.

4 Now, that's -- there what they said, and nobody from
5 the Department of Transportation has ever told me anything to
6 the contrary.

7 It's also been suggested that the reason that Mr.
8 Jenkins included that is in retaliation because Somerset
9 County Commissioners, despite the fact that this transit
10 authority in Cambria County has got financial problems that
11 they don't feel that they can financially swing participating
12 in our County, that he's, you know, doing certain things to
13 retaliate against Somerset County Commissioners.

14 Be that as it may, until -- unless and until there is
15 established that there has been a violation of the law or
16 anything else, now this is the kind of thing where somebody
17 throws up some kind of aspersion and then ever -- you know --
18 regardless of what's said thereafter, it sticks, because
19 people remember that it was said, and you know, I don't like
20 that because I'm not convinced that there was anything being
21 done in Somerset County that was any different than anywhere
22 else in this State. In fact, they indicate that what was
23 being done, was being done with the approval of the Department
24 and furthermore, it's my understanding that Mr. Jenkins
25 threatened two years ago to terminate service for everybody on

1 that line, so this is a lot more complicated than --

2 BY MR. CANALIS:

3 A Could I make a rebuttal to that sir. I was not
4 here earlier for Mr. Jenkins' testimony. The information
5 that I received has come from a different source, who has
6 stated that he has not been included in the involvement in
7 the transportation --

8 Q You're talking about the Fayette County Taxi
9 Company, which would like to provide service in Somerset
10 County, which was turned down by the Somerset County
11 Commissions.

12 A That's right sir.

13 Q Yeah, well, you know, to say from the basis of
14 that to suggest that somehow there're abuses in Somerset
15 County, because the Somerset County Commissioners made a
16 judgment that it's not cost effective for them to be running
17 a transit system and be parceling out some of the riders to
18 somebody else, after they have spent taxpayer and lottery
19 money to get vans, and the like; that's a judgment call
20 that's been made and because some one of your members thinks
21 that he ought to be in the County and ought to be getting some
22 of this money and he isn't getting any, and therefore, we say
23 we need to audit that County because there are abuses. I find
24 that to be offensive.

25 A Well, sir, I find it offensive that we've got cab

1 companies in our association --

2 Q We have a cab company in Somerset County. This
3 guy, as I understand it, is not that cab company.

4 A Sir, we have cab companies in our association who
5 have been audited a number of times. PennDot has not found
6 the major violations that they seem to be looking for, and yet
7 we are concerned why the County Transit Authorities have not
8 been examined, have not been audited.

9 Q That's fair; that's a fair criticism for you to
10 make, but when you're talking about my County and suggesting
11 that somehow this -- we need to do this. Here's a County
12 that proves it, because here is abuse. Put your facts
13 on the table, or stop making those kinds of accusations. If
14 you want my support on whatever it is you want us to pass,
15 then don't come in here with all kinds of allegations about
16 people doing wrong in my County unless you have the facts and
17 figures to back it up, and I don't think you do.

18 A Well, sir, we're all here today for a resolving of
19 a problem.

20 Q That's right. It's not to throw stones at Somerset
21 County.

22 Thank you Mr. Chairman.

23 CHAIRMAN LINTON: Any other questions? I think
24 that's it sir, and thank you for your testimony. I think
25 that's our final witness for today.

1 I'd like to thank all the participants and all those
2 who took the time to come before this Committee today. We
3 will be continuing our hearings in, I believe the central part
4 of the State, and it's quite possible that we might come back
5 to Allegheny County.

6 Thank you very much. Hearing's adjourned.

7 (Whereupon, at 6:07 P. M. the Hearing was adjourned.)

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I hereby certify, as the stenographic reporter, that the foregoing proceedings were taken stenographically by me, and thereafter reduced to typewriting by me or under my direction; and that this transcript is a true and accurate record to the best of my ability.

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