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The Honorable Paul Opsommer
N-1197 House Office Building
P.O. Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909

February 15, 2012

Dear Representative Opsommer:

I am writing in regard to HB5391, a bill to enable transit service providers to fingerprint drivers for criminal background checks. As the Director of Transportation for Ontonagon County I am responsible for hiring drivers to transport vulnerable passengers within our county. These passengers can be as young as 3 years old and traveling alone to day care or preschool programming; the very elderly or people with mental or emotional disabilities.

In the past I've conducted basic criminal background checks through the MI State Police ICHAT System which only provides a State of Michigan check. With recent high profile cases involving the molestation of innocent children, I don't feel that a statewide background check is the best that can be done. This was my reason for asking Representative Huuki to introduce enabling legislation that will grant all transit providers the authority to do a national data base criminal background check utilizing fingerprinting of drivers and driver applicants. I don't ever want to have to look back and know that I could have done more to prevent another tragedy against a child, but didn't.

HB 5391 will give all transit operators the tool that is needed to increase the level of safety and security of transportation dependent citizens in Michigan. As the House considers the merits of the bill, I hope that each member would vote as if their child, grandchild or elderly parent was the passenger that would be protected by this legislation.

Respectfully,

Vicki J. White

Vicki J. White
Director of Transportation
Ontonagon County Public Transit