



BUILDING BETTER LIVES

## Strong families & communities need sound public transportation

*Support the Regional Transit Authority funding & reforms (SB572, HA4)*

Voices for Illinois Children is a statewide, nonpartisan, nonprofit group of advocates. We work across all issue areas to improve the lives of children of all ages, throughout Illinois, so they can grow up healthy, happy, safe, loved and well-educated. We view public transportation as an issue of critical concern to children and families for several reasons – including these, which come into even sharper focus via the service cuts proposed for the Chicago area’s RTA system:

- **Children depend upon adults who, in turn, depend upon reliable mass transit.** Parents need to be able to get to work, the grocery store and other important destinations to provide for their families’ needs. Teachers and caregivers need to be able to get to their jobs of tending to youngsters’ learning and safety.
- **Many youngsters themselves rely upon good public transportation.** Plenty of Chicago-area teenagers take commuter trains to reach their high schools or after-school programs and activities; often their “school buses” are the Pace and Chicago Transit Authority variety.
- **Families’ quality of life is an inverse function of road congestion.** When more parents are stuck in traffic for longer periods, they lose valuable time they could be spending with their children – time they can never get back. And more cars on the road would generate more of the pollution that’s harmful to the health of Illinoisans.

Now is the time to plan for the future of public transportation – a future that truly supports the needs of kids, families and communities. Such a future starts with the wise revenue and system-reform plans outlined in Senate Bill 572, House Amendment 4. It surely does not start with greater gridlock on our roads and more pollution choking our communities. It does not start with the deep service cuts that have been proposed for the RTA, affecting up to 1.6 million daily riders. We firmly believe that families will gain far more from a better-supported transit system than they lose from a modest, regional sales-tax increase.

A capital plan to address the infrastructure needs of the entire state – from transportation to education – is vitally important, as well. State leaders must set aside their differences to reach a long-overdue capital agreement as soon as possible. However, the time-sensitive nature of the Chicago area’s RTA service cuts demand action on SB572 immediately.

*August, 2007. For more information, please contact Sean Noble, 312-516-5566 or [snoble@voices4kids.org](mailto:snoble@voices4kids.org)*