

BRIAN HIGGINS
26TH DISTRICT, NEW YORK

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May 7, 2014

Dr. Howard Zucker
Acting Commissioner
New York State Department of Health
Corning Tower
Empire State Plaza
Albany, New York 12237

Dear Commissioner Zucker:

I write to ask for your assistance in reviewing and reconsidering the recent decision made by the New York State Health Department to pull the Medicaid Transportation Contract from CTE (Center for Transportation Excellence), a Buffalo-based experienced provider. Many community leaders have expressed great concern about this loss as it will eliminate 40 jobs and force a funding reduction and possibly, the elimination of federal grant dollars targeted to a successful workforce training program for young people from highly challenged neighborhoods. It is a concern that I share.

Since its inception seven years ago, CTE has used significant private investment to leverage an impressive array of local, state and federal monies to develop training and technological advancement opportunities for city residents faced with innumerable challenges to employment. The CTE campus is also a model of good corporate citizenship as it takes pride in building improvements, vehicle maintenance and growing a strong, positive relationship with its surrounding community.

More than \$4 million in wages and \$1.2 million in non-wage expenditures have flowed into our region thanks to the CTE. And CTE has worked tirelessly with private, public and non-profit partners to bring \$2.6 million from a \$10 million national Department of Labor grant to Buffalo which is currently training hundreds of at-risk residents.

The CTE is also more than a social enterprise; it has a successful and impressive track record of meeting or exceeding all state standards as Erie County's Mobility Manager. Through its profound knowledge of the community and its commitment to innovation, responsible and responsive service, CTE has saved New York State and Erie County taxpayer's \$5 million in Medicaid expenses.

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With vision, a business plan built on collaboration and hard work, CTE has justifiably earned its stellar reputation as a transportation provider, employer, trainer and good neighbor. My office was an early supporter of the CTE and I remain ever confident in the management and staff to deliver timely, courteous and cost-effective service as well as provide comprehensive workforce training that leads to meaningful employment, higher education and a better future for individuals and families.

I respectfully request every consideration be given to retain CTE and ensure jobs are not lost, progress continues and hard fought federal dollars remain in Buffalo. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian Higgins". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style with a horizontal line extending to the right.

BRIAN HIGGINS

Member of Congress

CC: Honorable Crystal Peoples-Stokes, Member of Assembly, 141st District
Honorable Mark Grisanti, Member of NYS Senate, 60th District
Honorable Mark Poloncarz, Erie County Executive
Ms. Brenda McDuffie, President and CEO, Buffalo Urban League