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**Written statement of Margaret Smith-Hale in support of
Senate Bill 664 an Act Concerning Independent
Transportation Networks
March 11, 2008**

I am here today to speak in favor of dignified transportation for the 34,000 seniors and visually impaired persons in North Central Connecticut. 3,822 are people identified in the 2000 census as having difficulty going outside the home alone, and research shows that non-driving seniors make 15% fewer trips to the doctor and 65% fewer trips for social, family and religious activities.

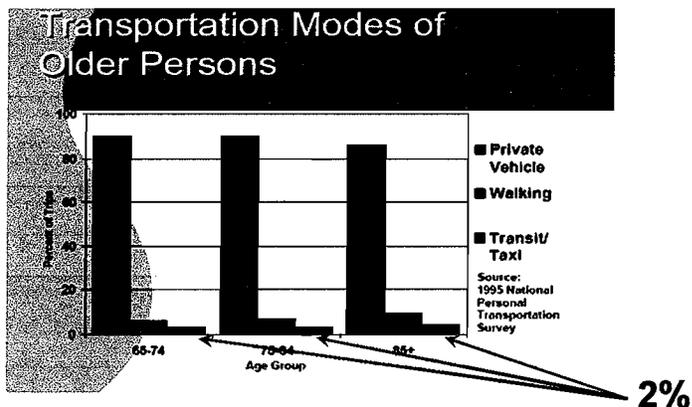
The need for safe and affordable senior transportation is well documented. Your foresight in 2006 created the opportunity for solutions in North Central Connecticut. Your grant of \$50,000 for planning and development was an investment, not a subsidy.

We became an affiliate of ITNAmerica® because it is the first and only national non-profit transportation network for America's aging population. The Independent Transportation Network® (ITN) model marries the power of information technology and the strength of local, grassroots support to create an efficient and financially sustainable solution to the transportation needs of seniors and their families.

Through the ITNRides™ software North Central Connecticut families connect to all other ITN affiliates throughout the nation. If you winter in Orlando, Florida, as a member of ITN*NorthCentralConnecticut*™ you can use your membership there. In addition, my daughter in Chicago can volunteer to drive there and transfer the mileage credits she earns into my Personal Transportation Account™ here.

ITN relies on a combination of volunteer and paid drivers – a characteristic that is unique among senior transportation providers. If volunteers are not available, the affiliate uses paid drivers – a practice that ensures the service is available 24/7, and is responsive to customer needs. Through the efficiency of the ITNRides™ software system, volunteers who in a typical transportation service could drive one person during their shift can now drive four, five or six, instead.

Senior Drivers



The National Highway Transportation Safety Administration found that older persons seldom use mass transit... ***they would rather use private vehicles.***

In a recent survey, the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration found that only 2% of seniors are willing or able to use mass transit. For those who cannot drive or limit their driving, we need to provide alternatives that are safe, affordable, dependable and user-friendly so that people can stay connected to families, friends, businesses and social activities in their communities.

All rides for ITN members are provided in private automobiles. Service is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Members can call for a ride at any time. We are about preserving the safety and dignity of older people. When members call for a ride, they are not asking anyone for a favor.

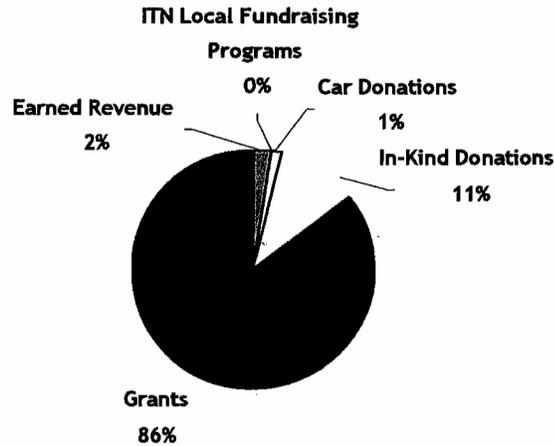
We provide door-through-door, arm-through-arm rides. Volunteer drivers help carry packages, fold walkers, and offer a steadying arm. Scholarships are available to low-income seniors.

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Year 1



Affiliates of *ITNAmerica* act as social entrepreneurs and follow proven business practices.

ITN helps drive the local economy by keeping seniors mobile. The impact on the local business community of just one ITN affiliate is between \$300,000 and \$500,000 per year. By 2010, the expected annual economic impact of all 40 scheduled ITN affiliates will be as much as \$20 million.

To qualify as an affiliate, we needed to raise \$125,000 from a mix of government and foundation funds. We received a grant of \$50,000 from the State of Connecticut, Department of Social Services, \$25,000 from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, \$17,500 from the Great Bay Foundation, \$10,000 from the Enfield Dial-A-Ride Bus Committee, \$5,000 from the Rockville Bank, \$5,000 from the United Way and the balance from other sources.

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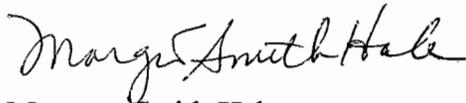
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The Independent Transportation Network is a trademarked brand, not a generic name. It brings with it a proven business model that would be impossible for a small organization to replicate. Any qualified Connecticut communities that wish to start sustainable ITN affiliates are welcome to participate.

We thank you for this opportunity to speak to you today and stand ready to answer any questions that you might have.

Submitted by:

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Margaret Smith-Hale".

Margaret Smith-Hale
Executive Director