

December 12, 2007

WASHINGTON, DC- Congressman Peter DeFazio (D-Springfield) scored a victory for American's with disabilities today. Legislation DeFazio authored, H.R. 3985, the Over-the-Road Bus Transportation Accessibility Act, passed the House of Representatives by a vote of unanimous consent.

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The measure directs the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) to actively enforce regulations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) by ensuring equal access to all commercial bus service for all individuals with disabilities. DeFazio introduced H.R. 3985 response to an article in the Washington Post which reported that eleven of the "curbside" bus operators along the Northeast corridor were not meeting ADA standards. Curbside buses do not use terminals but instead operate fixed-route, intercity bus service, picking up and dropping off passengers on the street. These curbside routes are often not accessible to the disabled. For example, an individual who is blind was denied access for his seeing-eye dog. The FMCSA argues that only the Department of Justice (DOJ) can enforce ADA requirements. This bill counters that argument by placing ADA requirements under the jurisdiction of the FMCSA for curbside bus operators.

"Because FMCSA has chosen not to act, Congress must legislate. H.R. 3985 is a common sense bill that ensures those with disabilities have full access to over the road bus service" DeFazio said. "It's been 17 years since the ADA was signed into law and it is high-time that the Department of Transportation enforces its regulations."

H.R. 3985 will now move to the Senate for consideration. DeFazio is the chairman of the Subcommittee on Highways and Transit which has jurisdiction over bus and motor carrier issues.