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Ohio Public Transit Association Announces Opposition to Issue 3

(Columbus, OH) – Citing significant public safety concerns, the Ohio Public Transit Association today announced its strong opposition to State Issue 3, a proposed constitutional amendment that would give a small group of investors a monopoly over the cultivation and sale of marijuana in Ohio.

The Ohio Public Transit Association represents 61 public transit agencies around the state with a total ridership of 115 million trips annually.

“Our members work hard to keep our roads safe for their 60,000 employees and the 500,000 Ohioans they serve daily,” said Jim Gee, President of the OPTA and General Manager of the Toledo Area Regional Transit Authority. “If Issue 3 passes, it will compromise the safety not only of the hardworking men and women providing public transportation but of everyone else on the road as well.”

Gee continued, “Marijuana use interferes with reaction time, peripheral use, and decision-making abilities. No one wants to ride a public bus in the lane next to a driver that is high, and my concern is that marijuana legalization will make this scenario commonplace.”

“We’re starting to see reports of Colorado and Washington that link the legalization of marijuana to safety problems on the road,” said Gee.
“It’s far more difficult to test for marijuana than it is for alcohol.”

To apprehend motorists driving under the influence of marijuana, Ohio law enforcement officers would require additional drug detection training and equipment.

In August 2015, the state of Washington released data showing an 83% increase in THC positive DUIs from 2011 to 2015. A recent report released by the Rocky Mountain High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) Task Force found that marijuana-related traffic deaths in Colorado increased by 92% between 2010 and 2014, even though recreational marijuana wasn’t legalized until 2013.

The Ohio Public Transit Association joins a broad coalition of professional organizations, law enforcement officers, and public safety advocates in calling for the defeat of Issue 3.

The Ohio Public Transit Association is a professional association that provides leadership, resources, support and technical assistance to public and private transit agencies in Ohio. OPTA members daily serve more than 500,000 Ohioans while employing more than 60,000. For more information, visit www.ohiopublictransit.org.