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WASHINGTON, D.C.—U.S. Congressman John B. Larson (CT-01) announced today that the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation has allotted \$3.5 million for the Job Access and Reverse Commute Program in Connecticut. Larson had requested that the money be included in H.R. 2299, the Transportation Appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 2002.

In 1998, Congress created a Job Access and Reverse Commute pilot program to fund the transportation of welfare recipients to and from job-related activities. This was enacted because many welfare recipients who were seeking work were prevented from accepting or holding jobs because they lacked personal transportation or existing public transportation did not operate at all shift times, or did not reach the area they were employed in. Hartford received \$800,000 one of the first pilots created by the legislation in 1998.

“The job access program has been immensely successful in moving people from welfare to work,” said Larson, “and is very much deserving of additional support to extend service locations and hours, and to increase the number of Connecticut residents who have access to this valuable service. This program is a great example of what a hand up can do for people who very much want a job, but are held back because they simply are unable to get to work, can’t afford their own car, or public transit doesn’t reach the location.”

Larson requested the \$3.5 million to provide improvements to transportation services by increasing service area or duration of service, add weekend or late night hours, and to provide demand-responsive rides where fixed-route transportation is not available.

The project has been a success in serving employment locations and shift times that were not served by existing fixed route transit. In the New Britain/Hartford area, the Job Access program has enabled thousands of people to move from welfare to work. Currently, 2,800 people use the Job Access service on a daily basis. By using public transit providers such as Connecticut Transit and regional transit districts, it has also increased ridership overall in the region’s transit infrastructure.

The \$3.5 million for the job access program is in addition to \$4 million in funding that Larson secured for the Hartford/New Britain busway in the Transportation Appropriations bill.