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Murray on Trump and Duffy's Plans to Tie Transit Funding to Birth Rates

Washington, D.C. — Today, U.S. Senator Patty Murray, Vice Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, released the following statement after the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) proposed new guidance for the Capital Investment Grants (CIG) program that would increase funding for projects based on their region's average birth and marriage rates compared to the nationwide averages. The CIG program funds infrastructure investments to expand public transit—including for bus transit and light rail and commuter rail improvements. Under the new proposal, the FTA would steer more grant funding to parts of the country where only more men and women choose to get married and more babies are born—providing an up to 10% boost.

"Tying funding for transit projects to marriage rates and how many babies a woman has is the sort of bizarre and dystopian idea you'd expect in a TV show, not actual policy put forth by the U.S. government—yet here we are. President Trump wants to weaponize federal grants to wage his

backward culture wars and punish Democrats, and it's past time Republicans join us to stand against this historically corrupt administration's efforts to rob our communities of resources they are owed—because it's already clear as day they are holding up projects in blue states while moving ahead with projects elsewhere."

The new proposal would apply to 40 projects across the country already in the CIG program, forcing transit agencies and local and state governments that have already spent years planning and designing projects to follow a whole slew of new rating and cost-share requirements. This could force entities to re-design projects and re-do environmental reviews, which will increase costs and delay construction, and in the worst case potentially makes projects ineligible for CIG funding. The new requirements could reduce CIG funding for important transit projects below the 40% floor set by Congress in the annual funding bills, which has been in place since fiscal year 2020.

These significant changes to the CIG program are another attempt by the Trump administration to penalize blue states and slow down and delay transit projects. Recently, the Trump administration advanced a CIG project in a red state while it continues to hold back two projects in blue states that have been ready for much longer.

Studies conducted last year when the Department of Transportation issued an order updating its governing principles to include a general preference to communities with higher marriage and birth rates showed that such prioritization would disproportionally hurt low-income, non-white residents.

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