

**TESTIMONY FROM DIANE BUKOWSKI TO THE SENATE  
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE FEB. 28, 2012 RE: SEMRTA BILLS**

I am Diane Bukowski, 63 years old and a life-long resident of the City of Detroit. For my entire life I have been a community advocate, a city worker and elected union official, and an investigative reporter, I am now editor of The Voice of Detroit on-line newspaper at [voiceofdetroit.net](http://voiceofdetroit.net), which has a growing readership locally, nationally and world-wide.

For the committee's benefit, I have included with my written testimony copies of the three most recent and thoroughly researched articles on D-DOT and Southeast Michigan Regional Transit Authority proposed by Senate Bills 909-912.

These bills are nothing more than a Public Act 4 for Detroit's transit system, and I am appalled that many who purport to oppose PA 4 sponsored and endorsed the bills. SB 909 will allow the region's largest transit system, D-DOT, which receives hundreds of millions a year in grants from the federal and state government, to be subsumed into an authority with a ten-member board that has only one member appointed by the Mayor of Detroit.

Yes, there must be a unanimous vote for this board to incorporate D-DOT, SMART and other transit systems into the authority, but this means nothing. Detroit Mayor Dave Bing has already conspired with Michigan Governor Rick Snyder to put these bills together, along with a roster of Republican and Democrat legislators. Bing will appoint the Detroit member.

What about the people and workers of the City of Detroit, who by the way are not represented by Transportation Riders United or MOSES? Under the new city charter, the people have the right to a city-wide vote before the assets or ownership of both D-DOT and the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department are transferred to anyone else. Yet these bills claim to supercede all local governments' rights in the matter.

Where does the legislature get this authority? How is this different from Snyder instituting Public Act 4?

You plan to finance the new authority out of a combination of increased motor vehicle registration fees, tax levies, and the purchase of bonds which will not be paid off by the authority, but by revenues from each participating transit system. All of these methods disproportionately affect the poorest people in Michigan, particularly here in Detroit.

The authority will have the right to OWN all the assets of D-DOT including the 46 new buses Mayor Bing just announced, and upgraded transit terminals. It will additionally focus the federal and state funds it gets on outlying regions like Ann Arbor and Detroit suburbs.

Mayor Bing has already made clear what the future for Detroiters is under this system, by announcing drastic cuts to weekend and 24-hour routes on top of huge cuts that have

been enacted over the last two administrations. He has laid off D-DOT bus drivers and mechanics, along with other D-DOT workers who keep our system going. He has not said these changes are temporary.

They are clearly part of the genocidal plan of the powers that be to down-size the city of Detroit, the world's largest Black-majority city outside of Africa, and to roll back every single gain that African-Americans fought from the Civil War to the battle against lynchings and Jim Crow in the South, to Dr. Martin Luther King's civil rights movement.

Dr. King said during the Aug. 28, 1963 March on Washington, "When the architects of our Republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir," Dr. King declared. "Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check, a check which has come back marked 'insufficient funds.'

"But we've come to cash this check, a check that will give us on demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice. ... there will be neither rest nor tranquility in America until the Negro is granted his citizenship rights. The whirlwinds of revolt will continue to shake the foundations of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges."

As a City of Detroit employee and union representative from 1974 through 1999, I have watched as the city has been stripped of everything its people own, from Detroit General Hospital in 1980, to rampant privatization in the rest of its departments since then, to the theft of Records Court, leaving Detroiters facing majority suburban juries, to the takeover of its public school system, to the regionalization of Cobo Hall, to a federal attack on Detroit's Water and Sewerage Department which has regionalized control of that system.

The takeover of D-DOT is the final straw—a travesty directed at the state's most disadvantaged citizens, with the assistance of sell-out leaders THEY elected. There will no longer be ANY trust in the electoral system in Detroit, and with good reason. As one speaker at the Friday hearing on DDOT cuts said, "You will not be satisfied until you have wiped Detroit off the face of the map."

**SHAME ON YOU ALL! I LOOK FORWARD TO THE DAY WHEN THE PEOPLE OF DETROIT WILL RISE AND CAST YOU OFF AND RE-TAKE CONTROL OF OUR OWN AFFAIRS AND THE FUTURE OF GENERATIONS TO COME!**

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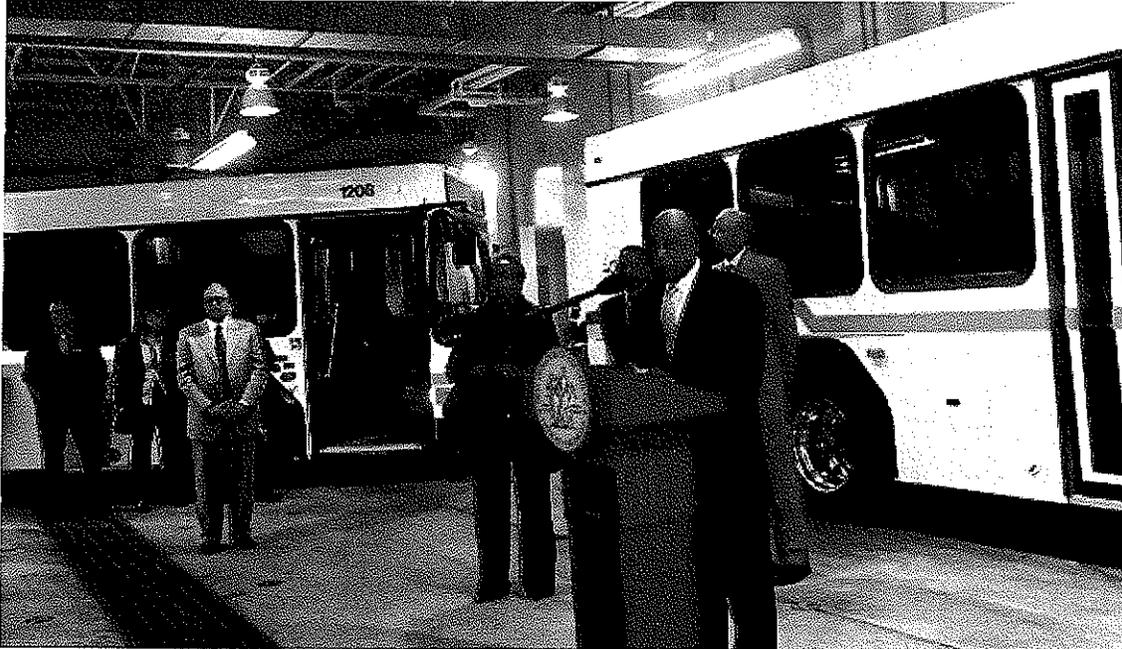
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**REGIONAL AUTHORITY WILL LIKELY OWN 46 NEW D-DOT BUSES;  
10-MEMBER BOARD HAS ONLY ONE APPOINTED DETROIT REP**



*New D-DOT CEO Ronald Freeland (at mike) and Mayor Dave Bing show off new buses*

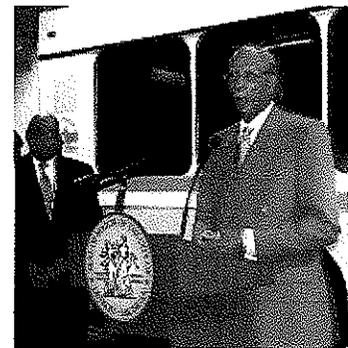
***Detroit route cuts and lay-offs still to go into effect***

**By Diane Bukowski**

**February 22, 2012**

**DETROIT** – Two days before public hearings on drastic cuts to Detroit bus routes and jobs, Mayor Dave Bing announced the city's acquisition of 46 new buses, funded with federal dollars given to Detroit. He also introduced a new D-DOT CEO, Ronald Freeland, of the private start-up company Envisurage, Inc.

During the press conference, held at the newly re-opened Shoemaker Terminal on Detroit's east side, Bing admitted that he supports Gov. Rick Snyder's plan for a Southeast Michigan Regional Transit System (SMRTS) which would include Detroit.



*Ronald Freeland, Dave Bing*

"I have bought into Gov. Snyder's plan, which would include the counties of Wayne, Oakland, Washtenaw and Macomb," Bing said. "But we have to fix the problems we have in D-DOT first,

so D-DOT can be folded into the new system. We are still looking at a reduction in routes, and lay-offs are still part of our fiscal stabilization plan.”

Hearings on route reductions and the lay-offs of 78 D-DOT drivers and at least 25 mechanics are set for Friday, Feb. 24 as detailed in earlier VOD article.

Bing said only 15 of the buses will be on the road by the end of this month, with the remainder expected to be in service by May. He said that the delay is due to “training” drivers to operate the new buses, which have GRS tracking systems and other devices. Buses marked “Training” and “Shoemaker Terminal” could be seen cruising around the site.

### **NEW D-DOT CEO PART OF ANTI-WORKER ENVISURAGE CO.**



**Ronald Freeland**  
February 6, 2007.”

According to his bio, Freeland had been Vice-President and Mid-Atlantic District Director at T.Y. Lin International, a private global, multi-disciplinary engineering services firm since Aug. 2010. T.Y. Lin International has offices in Rochester, N.Y., where Envisurage CEO Mark Aesch spent the last seven years as CEO of the Rochester Genesee Regional Transit Authority.

Freeland’s bio also says that he has “more than twenty-five years of experience in the transportation industry in the Mid-Atlantic region of the U.S., including projects involving railroads, motor carriers, automakers, and highway authorities He served as the Executive Secretary of the Maryland Transportation Authority (MdTA) since

Freeland said he would be working as part of the Envisurage team. Mark Aesch is CEO of that company, making him Freeland’s real boss. VOD asked Freeland about the Envisurage work order published in VOD’s first article on the cuts. It denigrated D-DOT workers essentially as lazy and inefficient and said significant staff and route reductions would have to be made.



**Mark Aesch, Envisurage CEO**

“I don’t think any responsible management team looks to get rid of workers,” Freeland responded. “But we need to look at what kind of transportation is needed in a smaller Detroit, and how many employees would be needed. Some might have to be laid off.”

He said he plans to meet with Henry Gaffney, President of Amalgamated Transit Union Div. 26, who represents D-DOT drivers, in the next two weeks. He has made no arrangements to meet with Leamon Wilson, President of AFSCME Local 312, representing bus mechanics.

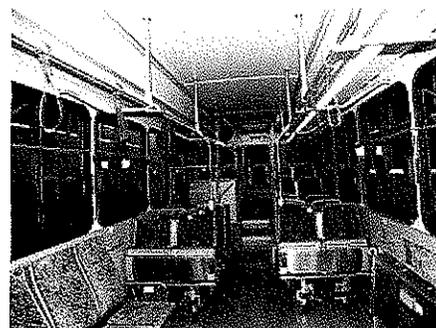
### **DETROIT SPENT AT LEAST \$13.8 MILLION FROM FEDS ON BUSES**

Bing said the city purchased the new buses from Gillig. Gillig is a California-based company now owned by the multi-billion dollar investment fund Henry Crown & Co. of Chicago, whose

chief competitors include the likes of the infamous Carlyle Group. Before his death, Henry Crown was reputed to have ties with the Chicago mob.

Gillig buses cost at least \$300,000 each for normal diesel-powered buses, according to an article on the Ann Arbor Transit Authority's Gillig buses. That means that the city of Detroit used federal funding of approximately \$13.8 million for buses, and additional federal funds to upgrade D-DOT terminals and facilities, all of which will likely become part of a new regional transit system.

But that is not the worst of this scenario.



*New DDOT bus interior*

## **DEMS SPONSOR ANTI-DETROIT REGIONAL TRANSIT BILLS**



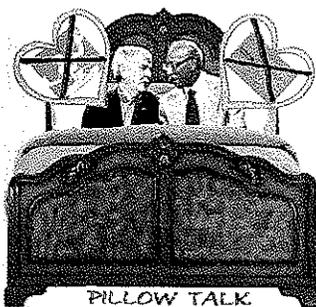
*State Sen Bert Johnson at rally against PA 4 Feb. 21*

A set of six bills pending in the State Senate and House, sponsored by a bi-partisan crew, would create a regional authority with a ten-member governing board that includes only one representative appointed by the Mayor of the City of Detroit. Sponsors include including Senators Tom Casperson (R-UP), Bert Johnson (D-Detroit, Highland Park), Michael Kowall (R-Oakland County), and Rebekah Warren (D-Washtenaw County).

State Reps sponsoring a virtually identical House bill include a shocking number of Democrats. They are Vickie Barnett (D-Farmington Hills), Tim Bledsoe (D-Grosse Pointe), Charles Brunner (D-Bay County), Phil Cavanaugh (D-Redford, Livonia, Dearborn Hts.), Bob Constan (D-Dearborn Heights), Brandon Dillon (D-Grand Rapids), Fred Durhal (D-Detroit), Andrew Kandrevas (D-Downriver Wayne County), Marilyn Lane (D-Macomb County, part), Ellen Lipton (D-Huntington Woods), Lesia Liss (D-Warren, Centerline), Matt Lori (R-Constantine), Rick Olson (R-Saline), David Rutledge (D-Ypsilanti), Wayne Schmidt (R-Traverse City), Dian Slavens (D-Canton), Thomas Stallworth (D-Detroit), Jon Switalski (D-Warren), and Jim Townsend (D-Royal Oak).



*State Rep. Fred Durhal at Benton Harbor rally v. PA4*



The SMRTA would be funded in part by an increase in motor vehicle registration fees, tax levies, bond purchases and other arrangements approved by the board, which will disproportionately affect the poorest residents of Michigan.

Snyder earlier touted this plan after SMART (the Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation) ran into problems related to its non-compliance with federal requirements guaranteeing the rights of

workers whose systems receive U.S. funds. After its unions complained, SMART laid off workers and cut routes.

The groups Transportation Riders United (TRU) and MOSES are also pushing the bills. TRU was set to go to Lansing in their support Feb. 23, a day before hearings on the bus cuts.

The legislation includes Senate Bills 909 through 912, and House Bills 5309-5311.



“We need quality transportation, and this bus rapid transit is that opportunity,” the Rev. Charles Williams II of Historic King Solomon Baptist Church, president of Metropolitan Organizing Strategy Enabling Strength (MOSES), told the Detroit Free Press Feb. 2.

Johnson, Rev. Williams, and others among the bills sponsors have campaigned vociferously against Public Act 4 *Snyder aide Dennis Muchmore*, the emergency manager act which currently threatens the *Rev. Wms. at anti PA4 rally Jan. 16* city of Detroit. But they have said nothing about the threats these regional transit bills pose to Detroit’s citizens and workers.

Sec. 5 of Senate Bill 909 says:

**“(1) An authority shall be directed and governed by a board consisting of all of the following:**

**(a) One governor’s representative appointed by the governor.**

**(b) Two individuals appointed by the county executive of a county within the public transit region that has a population of not less than 1,200,000 and not more than 1,500,000.**

**(c) Two individuals appointed by the county executive of a county within the public transit region that has a population of not less than 800,000 and not more than 850,000.**

**(d) Two individuals appointed by the chair of the board of county commissioners of a county within the public transit region that has a population of not less than 330,000 and not more than 380,000.**

**(e) Two individuals appointed by the county executive of a county within the public transit region that has a population of not less than 1,800,000 and not more than 2,000,000. One of the 2 individuals appointed under this subdivision shall be a resident of a city within the public transit region with a population of at least 600,000.**



**(f) One individual appointed by the mayor of a city within the public transit region with a population of at least 600,000.”**

This means that the Detroit representative will be vastly outnumbered on the board, even when certain matters require a super-majority (4/5) vote. Those matters include placing on the state ballot the levy of a special tax assessment and its amount, and approval of a motor vehicle registration fee hike and its amount.

**Where is Detroit's power now?**

According to Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) International officials, quoted in the article, Aesch was a vicious boss, serving as CEO of the Rochester-Genesee Regional Transportation Authority from 2004 through 2011. A PB/E work order (copy included in earlier VOD article) said he is moving to cut D-DOT city jobs and regionalize transportation.

Mayor Bing's press representative did not see fit to respond to VOD press inquiries, but COO Chris Brown finally acknowledged the cuts to the Detroit News, saying they will involve:

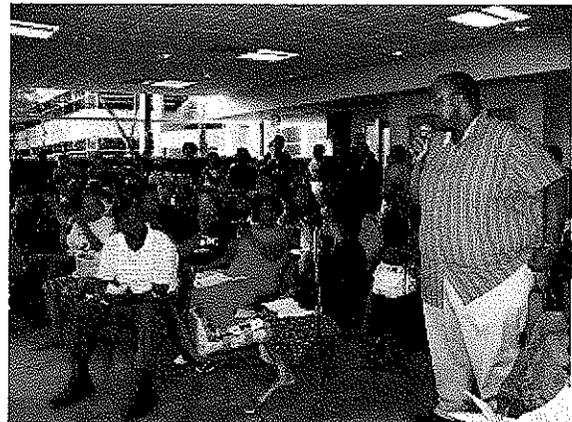
- Discontinuing bus service from 1-4 a.m.**
- Route 11/Clairmount weekend service only will be discontinued.**
- Route 46/Southfield Sunday service will be discontinued.**
- Eliminate Route 78/Imperial Express.**
- Route 49/Vernor service will end at the Rosa Parks Terminal in downtown Detroit.**

According to DDOT, the elimination of service from 1-4 a.m. will save only 6 percent of its daily costs. Brown declined to tell the News about specific staff cuts.

**The cuts are to begin March 3 instead of Feb. 24 as originally planned.**

**Public hearings: FRIDAY FEB. 24, 2012  
Northwest Activities Center, 18100 Meyers  
from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 6-8 p.m.;**

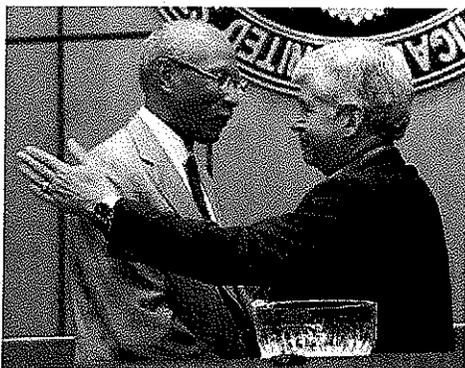
**East-side: Wayne County Community  
(at Interstate 94), 5901 Conner, from 11 a.m. until 1 p.m. and 6-8 p.m.**



*ATU 26 Pres. Henry Gaffney at DDOT hearing*

A service document detailing all changes and route alternatives can be obtained from the following locations on or after Friday:

- **DDOT main office, strategic planning/scheduling, 1301 E. Warren**
- **Detroit Public libraries**
- **Community access centers**
- **Online at [www.ridedetroittransit.com](http://www.ridedetroittransit.com).**



D-DOT gets most of its funding from the state and federal governments, and has 16 new buses paid for by USDOT funds in its terminals. It is likely Aesch is moving to takeover D-DOT and SMART, as advocated by Michigan Governor Rick Snyder, and establish an authority like RGRTA, at the same time reaping the benefits of state and federal funding.

Snyder gave Mayor Bing the Damon Keith award Feb. 14, (photo at left), indicating opposition to regionalization

The only three matters requiring a unanimous vote are construction of a rail passenger service, “a determination to acquire an existing public transit authority or agency,” and having state voters decide if the regional authority would assume responsibility for the acquired agency’s debt, “swap losses” (on debt interest), pensions, health care or other existing post-employment benefits.

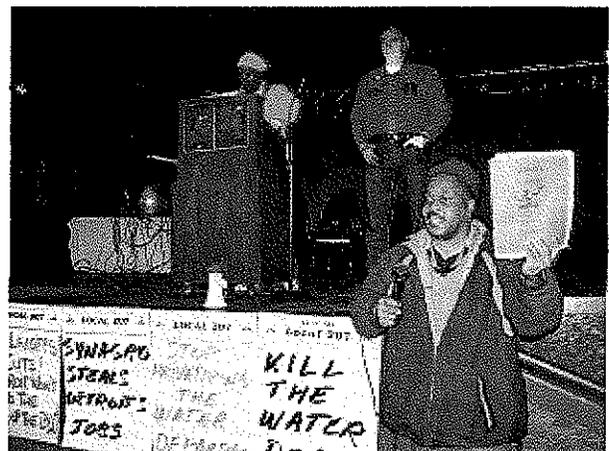
No mention is made in the bills of dealing with unions representing transit workers in Southeast Michigan.

The bill specifies that its provisions supercede those of local governments. One glaring problem is the fact that the City of Detroit charter requires a vote of the city’s people before any assets of D-DOT are sold or transferred. That requirement, which also applies to the Detroit Water & Sewerage Department, was already ignored by Mayor Bing and the *Mark Aesch* City Council last year when they sold off the Oakland-Macomb County Interceptor without a popular vote.

Only a simple majority of the board is required to approve contracts (which are not subject to set-asides for minority vendors unless required by federal law), rates, routes, and bond purchases (not backed by the authority; payment of bond principal and interest would come from individual agencies’ revenues, e.g. those of D-DOT.)

*DWSD worker Andrew Daniels-El shows City Charter*

Both the Senate and House Bills were referred to committee Jan. 26, 2012. Given the make-up of the sponsors and support from Snyder and Bing, they are virtually assured of passage.



## **DRASTIC DETROIT BUS CUTS FINALLY ACKNOWLEDGED; HEARINGS FEB. 24; DETAILS INCLUDING LINKS TO ROUTE CHANGES BELOW**



*Mark Aesch*

**By Diane Bukowski**

**February 16, 2012**

**DETROIT** — Fliers have been circulating around the city for the last month asking Detroiters to take up the fight against bus cuts that were planned for Feb. 24. VOD broke the story in a thorough article Feb. 9.. In addition to the cuts, the article focused on the *Envisurage* CEO *Mark Aesch* contract Mayor Dave Bing awarded to contractor Parsons/Brinckerhoff, which subcontracted to Envisurage, whose CEO is Mark Aesch.

cannot be expected from Bing.

On February 16, the date listed on D-DOT's website for its regular monthly "customer comments" meeting, D-DOT riders including several in wheelchairs took city buses to get to the hearing, scheduled for 5 p.m. They were greeted by a notice on the headquarters door that the hearing was canceled, to be replaced with the Feb. 24 hearings.



***What would Rosa Parks do?***  
experiencing terrible service.

"I walked all the way from Woodward and Warren to be at the meeting on time," said D. Griggs, who regularly attends the meetings. "No notices went out that the meeting was canceled. Here we are a week before the cuts are supposed to go into effect, and I haven't seen anybody mobilize to stop them or offer alternatives. D-DOT is part of the city's charter, they should not be eliminating it by regionalization."

Emily Harris has been wheel-chair bound for many years. Referring to friends she brought with her, including another man who is in a wheelchair, she said they are already

"We waited on the Woodward bus for hours. At least four buses passed us up before one stopped and the driver asked the passengers to make room for the wheelchairs. My housekeeper can't make it on time from where she lives in Hamtramck to my home." Antonius Whitley added, "What about the people who go to work on Saturday and Sunday? I have to start from John R and Dequindre. The buses at Woodward and the Fairgrounds are already packed when they leave. People have to squeeze together, and then buses come back to back four at a time.

The mainstream media did not announce the cancellation of the Feb. 16 meeting when it covered the cuts and announced the Feb. 24 meeting.



***DDOT customers who showed up for the canceled hearing Feb. 16; (l to r) Emily Harris, Antonius Whitley, D. Griggs, Ella Sanders and William Estell***