RESOLUTION 2025-05

REGARDING PROPOSED DISSOLUTION OF HILLSBOROUGH AREA REGIONAL TRANSIT (HART)

WHEREAS, HART provides essential transportation services to thousands of Floridians daily, many of whom have no alternative means of travel; and

WHEREAS, public transportation is a vital component of thriving, inclusive, and forward-looking communities; and

WHEREAS, the Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority (HART) serves as a backbone for mobility, economic growth, and environmental stewardship in the Tampa Bay region; and

WHEREAS, HART services are used by essential workers — including healthcare providers, hospitality and service industry employees, and students commuting to colleges, high schools, training programs, and extracurricular activities; and

WHEREAS, seniors and riders with disabilities depend on fixed-route and paratransit services for daily and life-enhancing activities; and

WHEREAS, HART Plus provides paratransit services for blind individuals and others with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, Florida Representative Michael Owen (District 60) plans to propose legislation that would dissolve the Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority (HART) and replace it with a Tampa-only transit authority — funded solely by Tampa residents and serving only the City of Tampa; and

WHEREAS, this proposal, championed by Hillsborough County Commissioner Josh Wostal, would cut transit service for more than one million residents in unincorporated Hillsborough County; and

WHEREAS, the area served by HART Plus would be drastically reduced to include only the City of Tampa if HART is dismantled; and

WHEREAS, eliminating HART and HART Plus services would leave thousands of Floridians without transportation; and

WHEREAS, marginalized groups without transportation would be forced to rely more heavily on public assistance programs, thereby increasing government spending; and

WHEREAS, dissolving HART and HART Plus would hurt the local economy by reducing consumer spending and increasing reliance on online delivery services — primarily from large corporate retailers; and

WHEREAS, the loss of essential transportation services would reduce the earning and spending potential of hundreds of thousands of Floridians, thereby reducing tax revenues collected by municipalities, the State of Florida, and the federal government:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVE by the National Federation of the Blind of Florida, in convention assembled this 5th day of October 2025, in the city of Altamonte Springs, Florida, that this organization demands the Florida Legislature reject any bill or measure aimed at dissolving the Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority (HART); and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that elected officials are called upon to protect and invest in HART, ensuring its continued service to the residents and businesses of Hillsborough County; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this organization calls upon the Legislature to engage with local stakeholders, transit advocates, and community leaders to identify strategies for strengthening the capacity of HART and other transportation entities throughout the State of Florida to meet the future mobility needs of all citizens; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Legislature to prioritize funding, innovation, and inclusive policies to enhance public transit rather than dismantle essential infrastructure; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we demand the Florida Legislature reject any proposal that would reduce or dissolve public transportation entities anywhere in the State of Florida.