

**Witness Testimony
Representative John W. Mannion (NY-22)**

**Member Day Hearing
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies**

March 25, 2026

Chairman Womack, Ranking Member Clyburn, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for holding this Member Day hearing and allowing me the opportunity to speak.

I'm here today to discuss some of the transportation and housing priorities that are most critical to my constituents in Central New York and the Mohawk Valley. I want to start by talking about one of the most transformational projects in our region: the Interstate-81 in Syracuse.

Over 60 years ago, an I-81 viaduct was constructed through the heart of Syracuse, physically dividing the city, displacing families, and creating devastating inequities that we still confront today. In recent years, the City, along with state and federal partners, have been working to finally replace the viaduct with a street-level community grid that will improve opportunities and quality of life for all residents.

This is a major priority for the state and the region, and anyone commuting through downtown Syracuse would understand its importance. That's why the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) had previously committed \$180 million to the state for this project, \$30 million of which was reserved for remaining work in the city.

Unfortunately, in the One Big Beautiful Bill that Republicans passed last year, the \$30 million in funding was abruptly rescinded. And about \$2.4 billion was rescinded for the entire program at DOT, affecting dozens of critical projects nationwide, in red districts and blue districts alike. Most of these projects, I-81 included, were well-underway, thoughtfully planned out, and strongly supported by their communities. Yet Congress got in the way of local priorities and undercut these essential infrastructure investments, leading to further delays and likely cost increases.

The communities we represent depend on the government to be a reliable partner, and this subcommittee can help restore stability and fairness in funding decisions. We need to get back on track, and I encourage the subcommittee to recognize the harm done by these cuts and help strengthen funding for highway infrastructure improvements across the board. I specifically am requesting increased funding for the DOT Reconnecting Communities Program, which can help fill the gaps for project like I-81. In FY26, Reconnecting Communities only received an

appropriation of \$30 million. That's a mere drop in the bucket compared to the \$2.4 billion that was taken away from projects nationwide.

In addition to an increase, I respectfully ask the subcommittee to consider language prioritizing projects impacted by last year's rescissions or that can otherwise demonstrate significant progress and community need.

Beyond highway infrastructure, I'd also like to share with the Subcommittee my strong support for several initiatives of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). HUD's HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) is critical for addressing a wide range of affordable housing needs and ensuring we have adequate housing supply.

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) provides similar flexibility to states and local governments in carrying out activities that expand economic opportunities and improve quality of life.

Finally, HUD's Fair Housing Programs are necessary for protecting against discrimination, investigating complaints, and providing direct community outreach and education.

I sincerely hope to see bipartisan support for these priorities in FY27 and am willing to work with each of you. Thank you again for having me here today and for your consideration.