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[Koch-Funded “Scholar” O’Toole: Seniors Love Car Dependence](#)

by [Angie Schmitt](#) on June 16, 2011

If there’s one thing we can learn from Randal O’Toole of the Cato Institute, the think-tank [co-founded by climate change denier and fossil fuel industry billionaire Charles Koch](#), it’s that the little guy in America is tired being pushed around by Big Transit.



Is your individual liberty threatened by the availability of transit? Then Randal O’Toole of the Koch-backed Cato Institute represents your interests. Photo: [Cato Institute](#)

Reports like Transportation for America’s [“Aging in Place, Stuck Without Options”](#) rankle O’Toole, whose selectively applied brand of libertarianism can be summarized as such: Subsidies for transit are anti-freedom, but subsidies for roads are pro-freedom.

What’s wrong with seniors growing older in places where they have no alternative to driving? Nothing at all, says O’Toole. In a recent opinion piece on [Cato’s @ Liberty blog](#), O’Toole asserted that seniors don’t ride transit and wouldn’t given the option. He added — in all seriousness — that T4A is a “shill for the transit industry.”

Oh, boy. David Goldberg at [T4A](#) is firing back:

The T4America coalition is alarming to people like O’Toole because it is an unusual player in the battles over the federal transportation program: It is expressly not an industry group. Rather, it represents millions of Americans who rely on our nation’s

transportation infrastructure and who want to see it preserved and expanded in ways that meet the needs of a changing nation.

O'Toole makes a big point of saying that not a lot of seniors take transit today. But that's [perfectly in line with our findings](#): Most live where transit service is poor or non-existent. In places that do have transit, [the number of seniors taking transit is, in fact, rising](#), and that is accelerating as gas prices rise.

It is clear that cash-strapped states and localities can't do what they need to do in the coming years without federal support. The upcoming transportation bill will allocate how our existing tax dollars are spent. We can keep spending on 1950s-era highway schemes and Bridges to Nowhere, or we can face reality and recognize the fact of aging, both of our existing infrastructure and our population, and dedicate federal support accordingly.

Elsewhere on the Network today: [Urban Review STL](#) praises the Champaign-Urbana region in Illinois for innovative use of technology in transit. The [Missouri Bicycle and Pedestrian Federation](#) examines cyclists' financial contribution to road maintenance. And [Car-Free USA](#) shares a video exploring the true price of a gallon of gas.