

# Press Release

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## **No Bus Cuts Denton Calls on Denton City Council to Remove Chris Watts from the DCTA Board of Directors Immediately**

**Denton, TX, September 22, 2021** — The No Bus Cuts Denton campaign calls on Denton City Council to remove its appointee, former Denton Mayor Chris Watts, from the DCTA Board of Directors immediately. He should be removed at once, because it has become clear that he simply cannot be trusted to follow the will of the people of Denton, govern DCTA's operations, or keep DCTA free from conflicts of interest.

First, Chris Watts has demonstrated that he cannot be trusted to do what the people of Denton, through their city council, instruct him to do. Denton City Council member Jesse Davis stated at the June 8, 2021 city council meeting that "this council speaks with one voice when it votes on an item before it." However, Mr. Watts ignored city council's voice at the July 22, 2021 meeting of the DCTA Board of Directors. Although Denton City Council had passed a resolution that DCTA should maintain its bus routes for six months, Mr. Watts argued at the July DCTA board meeting that the bus routes should be maintained for only three months. Moreover, at the September 21, 2021 Denton City Council work session, he stated plainly that he thinks that it is not his role to follow the instructions of Denton City Council as its appointee to the DCTA Board of Directors.

Second, we also know that Chris Watts cannot be trusted to govern the DCTA's operations. Shortages of drivers and executives are affecting the quality of its bus services. DCTA currently admits on its website that "some routes will have reduced operation due to bus operator shortage." Additionally, the resignations of the number two, three, and four executives at DCTA were announced at the July DCTA board meeting.

Finally, it is clear that Chris Watts cannot be trusted to keep DCTA from being a revolving door for executives between the public agency and its corporate contractors. Under his chairmanship, DCTA has become a breeding ground for conflicts of interest. For example, one of the DCTA executives who resigned last month is Nicole Recker. Ms. Recker was DCTA's point person for negotiating the details of its contract with the Via corporation for the GoZone minivan ride service, which received final approval from the DCTA Board of Directors at the July

DCTA board meeting. Ms. Recker resigned shortly thereafter, and less than a month later started working for the Via corporation. Another DCTA executive who resigned last month is Kristina Holcomb, who now works for AECOM, which has also been a contractor for DCTA.

**Chris Watts cannot be trusted and should be removed from the DCTA Board of Directors immediately.**

**About No Bus Cuts Denton:**

The No Bus Cuts Denton campaign comprises a committee of seventeen people from ten different labor unions and opposes DCTA's plan to cut bus routes in Denton and Lewisville after December 6, 2021. The No Bus Cuts Denton petition on Change.org lists more than 750 supporters.

**Additional Information:**

- No Bus Cuts Denton Change.org Petition: [www.change.org/nobuscutsdenton](http://www.change.org/nobuscutsdenton)
  - 758 supporters as of September 22, 2021.
- No Bus Cuts Denton on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/NoBusCutsDenton>
- No Bus Cuts Denton on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/NoBusCutsDenton>
- Recent Media:
  - Bryant, Paul. "DCTA bus drivers may have nowhere to go if GoZone proposal is approved." *Denton Record Chronicle*, June 23, 2021. [https://dentonrc.com/news/dcta-bus-drivers-may-have-nowhere-to-go-if-gozone-proposal-is-approved/article\\_672540a8-0967-512f-8d59-36869d6db4cc.html](https://dentonrc.com/news/dcta-bus-drivers-may-have-nowhere-to-go-if-gozone-proposal-is-approved/article_672540a8-0967-512f-8d59-36869d6db4cc.html).
  - Bryant, Paul. "Denton City Council members OK controversial resolution against DCTA proposal." *Denton Record Chronicle*, July 20, 2021. [https://dentonrc.com/news/denton-city-council-members-ok-controversial-resolution-against-dcta-proposal/article\\_c1ae791a-5ba4-5048-aaa1-3c0779334681.html](https://dentonrc.com/news/denton-city-council-members-ok-controversial-resolution-against-dcta-proposal/article_c1ae791a-5ba4-5048-aaa1-3c0779334681.html).
  - TransitCenter. "No Go Zone: Behind the Plan to Shrink the Bus System in Denton, Texas." *TransitCenter* (blog). July 21, 2021. <https://transitcenter.org/no-go-zone-behind-the-plan-to-shrink-the-bus-system-in-denton-texas>.
  - Rivas, Lorena. "GoZone vs. Buses." Video, 2:10. September 14, 2021. <https://youtu.be/9SYCrJ3zQAo>.

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