



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 168

Resolution urging the Metropolitan Transportation Authority to timely post and publicly announce information regarding all elevator service interruptions along with suggested alternatives.

By Council Member Koslowitz

Whereas, The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), signed into law by President George H.W. Bush in 1990, was an attempt to provide a comprehensive solution to discrimination against people with disabilities; and

Whereas, The ADA is intended, among other things, to provide access to public and private premises, such as a city's transportation system; and

Whereas, According to numerous disability advocates, as a result of broken elevators and escalators (E&E), the New York City subway system fails to support members of the disability community; and

Whereas, The Mayor's Office for People With Disabilities report "Accessible NYC" informs that out of the 469 subway stations in NYC, there are currently just 84 key stations, i.e. stations with high ridership, serving major activity centers and transfer hubs that are accessible to individuals with mobility disabilities and compliant with ADA Accessibility Standards; and

Whereas, Accessible NYC further informs that "although the MTA continues to improve accessibility, the number of accessible stations anticipated equals less than a quarter of all stations:" and

Whereas, A New York Times Opinion page article from March 2017 entitled "New York Has a Great Subway, if You're Not in a Wheelchair" informed that "New York's subway is by far the least wheelchair-friendly public transit system of any major American city, with only 92 of the system's 425 stations accessible,

and further advised that "on average, 25 elevators a day stop working, and these breakdowns are not quickly resolved;" and

Whereas, The Center for the Independence of the Disabled New York (CID-NY) reports that 81% of New York City subway stations are inaccessible to people who use wheelchairs or walkers; and

Whereas, CID-NY further notes that by contrast, 100% of Washington, DC and San Francisco stations are wheelchair-accessible, as are 74% of Boston stations, 68% of Philadelphia stations and 67% of Chicago stations; and

Whereas, Although only about 25% of New York City's subway stations are accessible, the Metropolitan Transportation Association's (MTA) failure to maintain the elevators and escalators at even these 25% of stations makes commuting by members of the disability community particularly uncertain and hazardous; and

Whereas, Advocates have expressed support for a "real time" notification system which is website accessible, so that an individual planning a trip in the subway knows, with the very latest information available and a high degree of certainty and probability, whether her or his otherwise accessible station is indeed accessible at the time of the trip; and

Whereas, A recent audit by Comptroller Scott Stringer found that the MTA did not perform all scheduled preventive maintenance on nearly 80% of the sampled E&Es; and

Whereas, That Comptroller's Audit also reported that one-third of the MTA's scheduled preventive maintenance assignments in the sample were completed late - if at all; and

Whereas, Comptroller Stringer said that "When seniors and people with disabilities can't get to where they need to go because of a broken elevator or escalator, government is failing them;" and

Whereas, Comptroller Stringer went on to say that "This audit isn't just about basic maintenance. It should be a reminder that every broken machine, behind every motionless escalator or elevator, there are people

who can't travel..it's unfair - and it's gone on for far too long. It must get fixed;" and

Whereas, A lawsuit recently filed by the Disability Rights Advocates alleges that "[t]he Metropolitan Transportation Authority discriminates against people with disabilities because of its widespread lack of elevators and electric lifts in the subway system, rendering it significantly more inaccessible than other cities with large public transportation systems;" and

Whereas, State Senator Daniel Squadron said that "Elevators and escalators are the first and last stop for many subway riders - but too often the last priority for the MTA", and urged a review [of MTA maintenance procedures] " ... because functioning infrastructure and timelines in the system are often as elusive as functioning escalators and elevators"; and

Whereas, Although the MTA website includes an MTA Guide to Accessible Transit, and an Accessible Elevator & Escalator Status section, overwhelming anecdotal evidence by members of the disability community and advocates reveals that the system of notification of broken E&Es itself is woefully inadequate and unreliable; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York urges the Metropolitan Transportation Authority to timely post and publicly announce information regarding all elevator service interruptions along with suggested alternatives.

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