



Legislation Text

File #: Res 0071-2022, **Version:** *

Res. No. 71

Resolution calling upon the Metropolitan Transportation Authority to make bus and subway announcements in the four most commonly spoken languages in New York City.

By Council Members Ung, Hanif, Cabán, Won and Hudson

Whereas, New York City has always been a city of immigrants, welcoming individuals from around the world in search of a better life for themselves and their families; and

Whereas, According to the Department of City Planning, New York City is home to one of the most diverse populations in the world with more than three million foreign-born residents from more than 200 countries who speak over 200 languages; and

Whereas, According to a 2019 Department of Consumer and Worker Protection report, one out of every three New Yorkers was born outside of the United States, one out of every two New Yorkers speaks a language other than English at home and almost one out of every four, or 1.8 million New Yorkers, are Limited English Proficient (LEP); and

Whereas LEP individuals have a limited ability to read, write, speak and understand English; and

Whereas, The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) bus and subway system is an essential mode of transportation and means of mobility for millions of New Yorkers, with a bus ridership of 1,129,831 and a subway ridership of 2,830,147 on February 23, 2022; and

Whereas, Despite the nearly two million LEP New Yorkers, MTA buses and subways continue to routinely make announcements only in English; and

Whereas, According to Mobility Lab, in a case study of immigrants using New Jersey Transit, a majority said they had difficulty understanding English-only announcements and suggested multilingual

announcements, among other things, to ease the language barrier; and

Whereas, Public transit systems in the United States make announcements in languages other than English, including the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority service announcements in Spanish and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority announcements on service disruptions and emergency information in Spanish; and

Whereas, Public transit systems outside of the United States make announcements in various languages, including the Tokyo Metro having prerecorded English announcements and Paris Metro announcements translated into English and other languages; and

Whereas, in July 2020, the MTA launched a public service announcement campaign consisting of recorded announcements in the subway, bus and commuter rail system encouraging riders to wear face masks, in both English and Spanish for the first time, indicating the feasibility of MTA buses and subways routinely having non-English recorded announcements; and

Whereas, MTA bus and subway announcements in languages other than English would reflect the commitment of the State to all New Yorkers, promote transit access and thus the general welfare of LEP New Yorkers and put New York City transit language access policy on par with cities across the United States and the world; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the Metropolitan Transportation Authority to make subway and bus announcements in the four most commonly spoken languages in New York City.

NLB
LS #7277
2/25/22