



Legislation Text

File #: Res 1180-2000, **Version:** *

Res. No. 1180

Resolution calling upon the Governor and the State Legislature to meet with the Metropolitan Transportation Authority and either implement a comprehensive half-fare program for persons with serious mental illness who receive Supplemental Social Security Income or else revise existing law so that the reduced fare provided to the users of the commuter services between New York City and its suburbs may be extended to the users of New York City Transit.

By Council Members Lopez, Clarke, Boyland, Carrion, Espada, Henry, Marshall, Warden, Watkins and White; also Council Members DiBrienza, Fisher, Foster, Harrison, Leffler, Linares, Michels, Perkins, Robles and Abel.

Whereas, Serious mental illness is often chronic, results in substantial functional disability and many persons suffering from serious mental illness are eligible to receive supplemental social security income benefits; and

Whereas, Currently, reduced fares are available to persons with disability from blindness, mental retardation, deafness and conditions which impair a person's ability to use their limbs; and

Whereas, Chapter 103 of the laws of 1997 authorized the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) in consultation with the State Office of Mental Health to study the feasibility of providing half-fares to persons with serious mental illness; and

Whereas, On May 18, 1999, the MTA distributed a draft of this study to, among others, members of the legislature and the mental health community; and

Whereas, Subsequently, Chapter 422 of the Laws of 1999 added a new subdivision 15 to Section 1266 of the public authorities law and required the MTA to implement a half-fare program for persons with serious mental illness who receive SSI benefits; and

Whereas, The Metropolitan Transportation Authority has taken the position that this law only applies to commuters traveling between New York City and the suburbs; and

Whereas, Advocates for the mentally ill, and legislators from both parties in the State legislature including Member of the Assembly James F. Brennan, Chair of the State Assembly Committee on Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities and Senator Frank Padavan, who are sponsors of the legislation, agree that this result was not the intent of Chapter 422 of the laws of 1999; and

Whereas, Reportedly, the cost to the Metropolitan Transportation Authority of providing reduced fares in the City and the suburbs would be \$7 million annually if the fare is restricted to those individuals who receive SSI benefits; and

Whereas, The legislature manifestly did not intend to provide reduced fares to commuters from surrounding counties but not to the users of New York City Transit; and

Whereas, This honorable body believes that persons with serious mental illness who need the assistance provided by Supplemental Social Security Income should receive a reduced fare that is already provided to persons with other kinds of disability; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the Governor and the State Legislature to meet with the Metropolitan Transportation Authority and either implement a comprehensive half-fare program for persons with serious mental illness who receive Supplemental Social Security Income or else revise existing law so that the reduced fare provided to the users of the commuter services between New York City and its suburbs may be extended to the users of New York City Transit.

Referred to the Committee on Transportation.

Is# 2496

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