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Res. No. 252

Resolution calling on the New York State Legislature to pass, and the New York State Governor to sign, legislation, which would create unlimited transfers within the two-hour period of paying the Metropolitan Transportation Authority subway or bus fare for pay-per-ride users.

By Council Members Riley, Gutiérrez, Stevens, Hanif, Won, Feliz, Salaam, Hanks, Farías, De La Rosa, Cabán, Williams, Hudson, Ung, Ossé, Banks, Holden, Schulman, Narcisse and Louis

Whereas, The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) is North America's largest transportation network, providing transportation to a population of 15.3 million people across New York City (NYC), Long Island, southeastern New York State (NYS), and Connecticut; and

Whereas, According to the MTA, on April 26, 2023, daily subway ridership was 3,994,458, which was 72 percent of daily ridership on the same day pre-pandemic, and bus ridership was 1,519,574, which was 70 percent of daily ridership on the same day pre-pandemic; and

Whereas, In order to ride the subway or bus in NYC, riders must either buy a MetroCard or utilize a contactless credit or debit card, smartphone, or OMNY card; and

Whereas, The fares for most riders increased in August 2023 on subways and local, limited, and Select Bus Service throughout NYC from $2.75 to $2.90, and for Express Bus service from $6.75 to $7; and

Whereas, One free transfer from subway to bus, bus to subway, or bus to bus within two hours of paying the fare is encoded on the device or the MetroCard used; and

Whereas, Despite the one free transfer, many people are faced with longer and complex trips that ultimately require additional transfers, which then increases the price of the total trip, as riders are forced to pay additional fares; and

Whereas, Increases in costs to riders who have to pay additional fares due to the one free transfer policy has exacerbated impacts on specific groups throughout the City, as a 2021 TransitCenter study found that, for the New York region, which includes NYC: transit provides less access to opportunities for Black and Latinx residents than other residents; transportation and development patterns create longer transit trips to healthcare and food; and expensive fares put opportunity out of reach for some riders; and

Whereas, These impacts have most likely increased since 2021, as the MTA has fallen into a worse budget deficit, with current projections, as of December 2022, indicating that there is a $600 million deficit that MTA officials have stated that they need to fill with additional state and city funds, otherwise this could lead to fare hikes, spending cuts and service reductions; and

Whereas, S.627, sponsored by NYS Senator Leroy Comrie, and A.774, sponsored by NYS Assemblymember Jeffrey Dinowitz, have been introduced at the state level to ensure that riders of the MTA system do not incur extra costs due to complex trips and a lack of an additional free transfer with the establishment of a "two free transfers policy," provided that the MTA shall not pay any costs related to the policy from its operating or capital budgets and may only implement the policy with funds appropriated by the state; and

Whereas, Although these bills will provide some relief to riders, many riders need more than two free transfers, thus, legislation should be adopted that would require the MTA to expand the one free transfer policy to unlimited free transfers in an effort to ensure that riders who have complex and long trips via subway and bus throughout NYC do not have to pay more than riders with shorter and less complex trips; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the New York State Legislature to pass, and the New York State Governor to sign, legislation, which would create unlimited transfers within the two-hour period of paying the Metropolitan Transportation Authority subway or bus fare for pay-per-ride users.

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