



Legislation Text

File #: Res 0450-2024, **Version:** *

Res. No. 450

Resolution calling on the Metropolitan Transportation Authority to exempt veterans from tolls under the Central Business District Tolling Program.

By Council Member Holden

Whereas, In 2024, The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) approved the Central Business District Tolling Program (CBDTP), a Congestion Pricing initiative that will charge vehicles for entering the boundaries of the Central Business District (CBD) located in Manhattan; and

Whereas, The CBD includes 60th Street in Manhattan and all roadways south of 60th Street, except for the FDR Drive and West Side Highway/9A, including the Battery Park Underpass and surface roadway portion of the Hugh L. Carey Tunnel connecting to West Street; and

Whereas, When the CBDTP takes effect on June 30, 2024, passenger vehicles will be charged \$15 during peak hours and \$3.75 during non-peak hours to enter the CBD; and

Whereas, While reducing vehicle congestion, gaining revenue to improve the MTA public transit systems, and reducing pollution are all laudable goals, the implementation of the CBDTP will pose financial burdens on those veterans who already face numerous challenges navigating and affording fundamental aspects of civilian life; and

Whereas, Veterans often experience unique difficulties when transitioning back to civilian life, including the significant challenge of finding employment in light of their lack of civilian work experience, the adjustment to disabilities acquired during service, and the management of mental health struggles, all of which can lead to periods of financial instability; and

Whereas, According to the most recent U.S. Census data, the average median income of New York

State's veterans is \$68,461; and

Whereas, Additionally, 16.7% of New York State's veterans live below the federal poverty level and 990 of the State's veterans are homeless; and

Whereas, Furthermore, 18.2% of New York State's veterans have a service-connected disability;

Whereas, Forcing veterans to pay the CBDTP toll places an undue hardship on this vulnerable population; and

Whereas, Veterans have made significant sacrifices in service to their country and many of the benefits they receive when they return home honor their service and serve as a safety net for their transition back to civilian life;

Whereas, New York offers unique benefits to service members, veterans, and their families, including property tax exemptions, the New York National Guard Tuition Program, veteran and dependent education assistance, compensation for state active duty, employment assistance, civil service preference, special vehicle license plates, as well as hunting and fishing licenses and New York State Parks privileges; and

Whereas, Exempting veterans from CBDTP tolls would align with the principles of fairness and gratitude that undergird laws conferring benefits and assistance upon veterans, and may also help alleviate financial strain on veterans; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls on the Metropolitan Transportation Authority to exempt veterans from tolls under the Central Business District Tolling Program.

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5/3/24
EA