



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 618

Resolution calling upon the MTA to allow riders travelling within New York City limits to pay a fare for commuter rail equal to that of a MetroCard ride on New York City Transit subways and buses; and allow for free transfers between commuter rail and New York City Transit subways and buses.

By Council Members Miller, Adams, Yeger, Grodenchik, Vallone, Ayala, Rosenthal, Cumbo, Cornegy, Moya, Koslowitz, Holden, Chin, Dromm, Van Bramer, R. Diaz and Gibson

Whereas, In March of 2017, the MTA raised fares on trains, buses, bridges, tunnels and commuter rail across their entire system; and

Whereas, The MTA has raised fares for riders six times since 2009; and

Whereas, A recent report issued by the New York City Comptroller, entitled, “Expanding Access in One Swipe,” argued that the fare for trips within City limits on the MTA’s Metro-North and Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) are extremely expensive and that many people are priced out of commuter rail and as a result commuter rail is underutilized; and

Whereas, The Comptroller argued that instead the MTA should lower the cost so that it is equal to a the price of a one-way subway and bus fare and allow free transfers for the subway and buses; and

Whereas, According to the Comptroller’s report, the proposal would cut commute times in half, relieve overcrowding on subways, and dramatically expand mass transit in 31 neighborhoods; and

Whereas, The MTA presently has several subsidy programs for travel within specific areas, including the CityTicket program, which charges \$4.25 on Metro North and Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) travel within city limits exclusively on weekends; the \$3 intermediate fare for all Metro North Travel within the Bronx; the \$3.25 fare for all off-peak LIRR travel within Zone 3, which includes 14 stops in eastern Queens; and

Whereas, CityTicket has specific restrictions, including that it is only available on weekends; it cannot be used to transfer trains at junction points, even when remaining within city limits; it is only available on the date of purchase; it cannot be purchased on board trains; it is not available on the New Haven Line between Manhattan and Fordham station; and it does not provide free transfers between commuter rail and subways and buses; and

Whereas, On weekdays, when CityTicket is not in effect and a larger number of commuters are traveling, fares for commuter rail are over 50% higher; and

Whereas, The MTA's Atlantic Ticket program, offers a discounted fare of \$5 for all trips between southeast Queens and Brooklyn's Atlantic Terminal, but does not offer a discount for Manhattan bound commuters and does not provide free transfers to the subway or bus (except through its 7-day weekly pass), and it is not available for purchase on train cars or through the MTA's mobile ticketing app; and

Whereas, The MTA has considered implementing a pilot program known as "Freedom Ticket Pilot," which would allow riders to purchase one-way single tickets, weekly or monthly passes that would be valid for both subway and LIRR trains; and

Whereas, Under the proposed Freedom Ticket pilot, the fare would be more expensive than Metrocard rates, but it has the potential to be cheaper than purchasing both a Metrocard and an LIRR ticket; and

Whereas, According to MTA data, travel time via commuter rail within New York City is considerably faster than comparable subway and bus trips, with trips between Grand Central Station and several stations in the Bronx taking 50% less time; trips between Penn Station and outer Queens stations taking over 50% less time and trips between Jamaica Station in Queens and Flatbush Avenue in Brooklyn taking nearly 75% less time; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That The Council of the City of New York calls upon the MTA to allow riders travelling within New York City limits to pay a fare for commuter rail equal to that of a MetroCard ride on New York City

Transit subways and buses; and allow for free transfers between commuter rail and New York City Transit subways and buses.

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