

PUBLIC TRANSIT PUBLIC GOOD

Riders, Workers, and Communities
UNITED FOR TRANSIT JUSTICE



GREEN JUSTICE COALITION

TRANSIT SOLUTIONS FOR EQUITY, SUSTAINABILITY AND ECONOMIC GROWTH IN OUR COMMONWEALTH

Transit is a lifeline for our communities. An investment in public transit and the infrastructure that supports it will grow our state economy, slash our greenhouse gas emissions, and increase access to work, educational, civic, and social opportunities. To ensure this investment advances equity and opportunity across regional, economic and racial lines we need solutions that FIX public transit, FUND IT and MAKE IT FAIR.

An Act Establishing A More Equitable Public Transit Fare Structure

Docket Numbers: SD 1028, HD 3262

Lead Sponsors: Senator K. Donnelly, Representative S. Garballey

The Need: In order to promote environmental sustainability, meet the needs of diverse populations across regions of the state, and support and encourage economic development and job growth, we need a robust transportation system throughout the Commonwealth. To meet operational needs, our transit authorities will continue to look for ways to raise revenue through various usage fees. But simply raising fares on individual riders will disproportionately harm low-income individuals.

- Fare hikes keep low-income riders (including youth, seniors, and people with disabilities) from accessing transit and the services, goods, and resources they need. Low-income residents rely more heavily on public transit and have fewer resources to absorb the added costs.
- While the goal of the rest of our transit system is to encourage ridership growth, transit authorities are increasingly looking to the farebox to *discourage* paratransit riders from taking the trips they need. The recent increases in paratransit fares in the MBTA area have resulted in dramatically decreased ridership since July 2012. Some RTAs have also proposed severe and disproportionate increases in demand-response fares.
- Public investment in transit is critical to the health and continued growth of our private and non-profit sectors, connecting workers to jobs, students to school, and clients and customers to goods and services. But, many institutions of higher education and businesses do not have a direct opportunity to contribute to public transit.
- Youth who are not pursuing a traditional high school or higher education tend to have fewer resources than others, but are not covered by the student fares in many transit authorities.

Solutions proposed in our bill:

- Ties increases in fares to increases in area wages and provides discounted fare passes for youth and seniors
- Implement a tiered fare structure for paratransit.
- Create a University Pass program, requiring all colleges and universities near transit service to buy discounted passes for students and staff.
- Create a voluntary Employer Pass program, allowing employers with more than 50 workers to buy discounted passes for employees.
- Pilot a low-cost youth pass for riders between the ages of 12 and 21 years old, who may be going to work, job training programs, or GED classes.

An Act Establishing More Public Input into Public Transit Decisions

Docket Numbers: SD 1144, HD 01320

Lead Sponsors: Senator K. Spilka, Representative C. Coakley-Rivera

The Need: Throughout the state, decisions about transit service, fares, and capital investments are made without the resources needed or the institutional voice of riders and workers. The systems show these failings.

- An analysis we conducted of several regional transit authorities across the state revealed that it takes an average of 4.8 times longer to commute by bus than by car.
- Currently, Advisory Boards comprise city managers, mayors, and chairs of the board of selectmen (or the designee). The only rider guaranteed to be on these Boards is a non-voting representative of users of para-transit.

Solutions proposed in our bill:

- Require each transit authority to perform a community-led comprehensive service assessment that includes a market analysis, a performance analysis of the existing service, and recommendations to better align services with local demand, regional job creation goals, and statewide environmental goals.
- Include a regular rider of the MBTA and a labor representative on the MBTA/MassDOT Board of Directors and regular riders and labor representatives on regional transit authority advisory boards.
- Require a study assessing the feasibility of establishing one or more facilities for the purposes of overhaul and other major repair, manufacture or assembly, installation and upgrade of mass transit vehicles in service throughout the Commonwealth.

An Act Establishing A Payroll Tax to Increase Funding of Mass Transportation

Docket Numbers: SD 00860, HD 3303

Lead Sponsors: Senator D. Wolf, Representative S. Garballey

The Need: Public transit funding is woefully inadequate, unstable, and inequitable.

- Each year, regional transit authorities (RTAs) use more than \$30 million of federal funding meant for capital investment to pay operating expenses, resulting in fewer resources for capital needs.
- Costing the MBTA more than \$120 million per year, Big Dig debt service costs twice as much as the MBTA would have saved when it proposed to eliminate more than 100 bus routes last year. The debt burden weighs on the MBTA so heavily because none of its expected revenue streams *except the farebox* have performed up to expectations.

Solutions proposed in our bill:

- Establish a statewide employer tax of 0.75% of their payroll on all employees whose wages exceed \$100,000 per year. The payroll tax creates a system through which employers can contribute to the operation of the transit systems that benefit them.
- Distribute the revenues generated by the payroll tax outside of the MBTA area equitably among the RTAs, while investing monies raised in the MBTA area within the MBTA area.
- Create a standing Transportation Finance Advisory Board to ensure that our transportation system is adequately financed over time and to sound an early alarm if shortfalls arise.

Public Transit–Public Good Campaign

www.publictransitpublicgood.org

Alternatives for Community and Environment/T Riders Union • Amalgamated Transit Union Local 22 • Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1547 • Bus Riders United of Southeastern Massachusetts (*Amalgamated Transit Union Locals 174 & 1037, Community Economic Development Corporation of Southeastern MA, Coalition Against Poverty/Coalition for Social Justice, Greater Southeastern Massachusetts Labor Council, Massachusetts Senior Action Council, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth Labor Center*) • Carmen's Union–ATU Local 589 • Community Labor United • Greater Four Corners Action Coalition • Massachusetts Communities Action Network • Massachusetts Senior Action Council • On the Move • United for Transit Equity–Pioneer Valley (*Alliance to Develop Power, Amalgamated Transit Union Local 448, Massachusetts Senior Action Council, Student Labor Action Project, Western Massachusetts Jobs with Justice, Stavros*) • Massachusetts AFL-CIO • IAM Local 264 • Unite Here!/New England Joint Board • Teamsters Local 25

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