



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Brad Hoylman-Sigal

Senator Hoylman-Sigal's Testimony to the MTA on Proposed Fare Changes

BRAD HOYLMAN-SIGAL June 26, 2023

| ISSUE: **MTA, FARE HIKE**



Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the Metropolitan Transit Authority's proposed fare changes.

I represent New York's 47th State Senate District on the West Side of Manhattan, which runs from Christopher Street to 103rd Street. The 1, 2, 3, A, C, E, 7, L, and B subway lines, as well as numerous buses operate in my district.

I am well aware of the MTA's fiscal needs. Since the MTA announced in July 2022 that it expected a budget deficit of \$2.5 billion by 2025, I have been collaborating with city officials and my colleagues in the Senate to help bridge this cliff. Indeed, in the 2023-24 budget, the Legislature and the Governor

secured a one-time payment of \$300 million from the State of New York and dedicated future revenue of over \$1 billion. This includes \$65 million specifically to address potential fare increases.

I am disappointed that despite these measures, the State, City, and the MTA have failed to avert the proposed fare increase from \$2.75 to \$2.90 per ride.

New Yorkers are still struggling to recover financially from the pandemic. [50% of working-age households](#) in New York City do not have incomes that cover basic needs, up from 36% prior to the pandemic. To be eligible for the Fair Fares program, a New Yorker must make less than \$14,850 for a single individual in 2023—[four times less](#) than an estimated living wage in New York City.

Given the MTA's immediate fiscal outlook, this year's fare hike appears inevitable. Going forward, I urge the MTA to continue working with State and City partners to unlock sources of revenue beyond the farebox. This could include repealing the Madison Square Garden property tax exemption, raising top Personal Income Tax rates on incomes above \$5 million, and raising the MTA corporate tax surcharge. Updating infrastructure to combat fare evasion would also secure future revenue, and I applaud the MTA's plans to redesign subway turnstiles.

As New York's history shows, transit is a public good that benefits our entire Metropolitan Region, and fare hikes disproportionately place the burden for upkeep on lower-income New Yorkers. At a time when the MTA is already struggling to attract passengers, transit should be more accessible, rather than more expensive.

Sincerely,

Senator Brad Hoylman-Sigal

New York State Senate

47th District