

Dear Senator Prozanski,

I am a TriMet Fare enforcement, Assistant Manager. I spend a majority of my time in the field mentoring fare enforcement officers. I have a vested interest in their success and have the distinct pleasure of serving a very talented and diverse workgroup who care about their community and take pride in their job.

Today I attended the public hearing for HB 4097 and wished to speak on TriMet's behalf before time expired. After listening to testimony from House Representatives, I remained opposed to the bill as written and believe it is completely unnecessary. The presenter's seemed focused on the notion police agencies are racially motivated and somehow driven to oppress the poor and minorities. University studies prove this is untrue. There was also a reliance on a controversial court decision interpretation as well as less than accurate news articles to prove various points. In my view, this lessened his position. It is my opinion, House Bill 4097 failed to address any real or perceived health, welfare, and/or safety concerns of a majority of Oregon commuters and transit employees.

I have a long professional background in law enforcement. One of my assigned duties was serving as a patrol sergeant at Central Precinct Transit Police Division. I attended monthly safety and security meetings in the Lloyd Center business district. I kept stakeholders informed of transit police's capabilities and helped problem-solve crime related issues in the area. I routinely responded to priority calls whether or not they were transit related. I often consulted with a crime analyst who plotted hot spots where crime occurred on the system. This provided officers valuable insight on where they could be most productive and effective in curbing criminal activity. Oftentimes I assigned officers to fare missions to keep potential problems from escalating. Depending on the location, sometimes there were not enough fare inspectors so we assisted them. Sometimes commuters did not want to show their fares or ID so we would intervene. We would use police discretion on enforcement. Police presence is very important on the system. It is needed in support of code and fare enforcement so they can do their job well. We enjoyed working in a concerted effort to keep one another out of harms' way and hold defiant violators accountable.

Yet fare enforcement always took a backseat to priority calls. As a result, fare missions were often shortened or cancelled all together to meet the needs of the public. Police resources are not being mismanaged. Fare enforcement is used as a tool to test voluntary compliance. Asking to get one's feet off the seat is another. No one knows how someone will initially react when questioned by authority. Fare enforcement is just one of many TriMet codes and regulations. There is no need to take this tool away.

Fare inspectors serve as an extra pair of eyes and ears. They are the first to call when there was a rapidly, evolving, and dangerous situation. This becomes more complicated when it crosses multiple jurisdictional lines. Fare inspectors don't have the luxury of carrying defensive weapons and must rely on a timely response from police and/or security personnel. It is imperative transit employees and the public are protected. With the recent closure of Detox and Unity mental health hospital, overcrowded jail conditions, and the recent murder trial less police involvement does not seem like a good idea.

Yes, it's a minor inconvenience to show one's proof of valid fare or ID when inspected. Obviously, it's not the crime of the century and if you've paid your fare, the entire interaction takes about 10 seconds. You can trust your friendly fare inspectors to be courteous, professional, and knowledgeable. They want

to help and expect to be treated with a certain level of respect and kindness. If unable to do their jobs safely and effectively, this will lead to a fareless system. The public will be forced to turn to other transportation alternatives.

Stephen Brown