

Chair Prozanski and committee members,

Good morning. My name is Tristan and I am a member of Bus Riders Unite here in support of HB 4097. We are a union of transit-dependent people from throughout the Portland metropolitan area advocating for a more accessible, equitable and sustainable transportation system. As a steering committee member, I also have the pleasure of representing BRU on TriMet's Transit Equity Advisory Committee and the Safety and Security Subcommittee therein. Some of BRU's recent victories include postponing TriMet's planned fare hikes and working with the TriMet Board of Directors to create a fare holiday beginning next year in honor of Rosa Parks' birthday as a meaningful advancement toward a fareless public transit system.

As it is with most of our membership, I am transit-dependent and have been ever since moving to Portland in 2014 and even prior to that. I've never owned a car and I never plan to. I don't even know how to drive and there's no bus stop outside the capitol building. Even if there were most of us are too busy. TriMet riders are poorer, browner and speak more languages than almost any other demographic. Untold barriers stifle our participation. So when decisions like these are being made, the people most impacted rarely have their voice heard. I am privileged to be speaking here today.

But who is being heard? TriMet executives pushing an outdated agenda. Well-funded legal consultants with reams of data. Police association lobbyists worried about losing millions in TriMet contracts. They'll say it's about safety, but what is safety? When we canvass on the buses and trains, riders talk about safety in much different terms. To them safety means lights at shelters, late-night bus service and high ridership because a well-used transit system is a safer system. They don't want armed cops, bomb-sniffing dogs or an \$11 million transit police precinct the likes of which TriMet plans to open in July.

TriMet likes to highlight a PSU study they commissioned that allegedly found no racial bias in their fare enforcement tactics. What they won't tell you is that the study only accounts for TriMet employees, not transit police officers. Their biases remain unscrutinized yet we trust them to judicially apply this tactic of fare inspection. In all another contexts, a law enforcement detention absent individualized suspicion is undeniably a violation. Yet under current rules simply being in the vicinity of a transit station is putting yourself at risk of an unlawful search. This is bus stop and frisk.

Representative Hernandez' bill proposes to correct this gross injustice that disproportionately impacts transit-dependent people, low-income folks and Black, Brown and Indigenous communities and on behalf of Bus Riders Unite I urge you to support its passage.

Thank you.