

Allenie Downing

HB4097 Testimony

February 24th, 2020

HOUSE BILL 4097: OPPOSE

Members of the Senate Committee On the Judiciary Committee:

As a constituent and a part of the general public HB4097 needs to and must be rejected. It is said that public safety is a staple of fare enforcement yet this bill contradicts that very notion. Fare related or not, accountability and public safety should not be sacrificed. In addition not paying for a service and using it knowing that you are required to pay is a criminal act of theft of service. However, mass transit give people many different options and avenues to settle the situation as a civil matter as oppose to a criminal matter.

While working as a Fare Inspector, there has been many situations and incidents where my primary function is pushed aside due to an individual unable to face personal responsibility. For instance on 2/23/2020, while checking fares in the fair and equitable manner that we proceed in, I came across a person who when requested to furnish their proof of fare, the individual immediately became hostile. Stating and I quote, “you are a f—king, traitor. I will show you what a real man is, just take off that badge.” This individual continued to spiral upwards to the point of dropping his bags, posturing up, and adjusting his gloves in preparation, as it appeared, to fight. This is just one incident in many.

As an African American male from these communities where people were and are disenfranchised, I understand the necessity for equity. This Bill is not an ally of equity. It is the ally of those privileged enough to have fare and “chose to take the risk,” in their own words. Those who have blatant disregard for accountability and personal responsibility. Those who use the system causing it to be unsafe for others. This bill is a violation of public interests, common morality, and civility.

Stop HB4097

Sincerely,

Allenie Downing