

2/24/2020

Dear Senator Prozanski & Committee Members,

My name is Brian and I am a current Fare Inspector for Trimet. I first would like to thank you for giving me time to briefly share my thoughts and concerns in regards to HB 4097. In hearing some of the testimonies from both sides today, I noticed that those in favor of HB 4097 were strongly highlighting people of color, low-income and homeless riders, who struggle purchasing fare / proper fare. In defense, those who were against HB 4097 were strongly making a case that race, ethnicities, income and status were non-factors in issuing an individual a warning or citation for no proof of fare, myself included.

After the two sides testified, we never really addressed this bill. HB 4097 is designed to have police officers not conduct or participate in activities intended to determine whether a person has proof of valid and proper fare. It does state and allow that police officers can be present and enforce laws unrelated to fare and to intervene in situations which the safety of a police officer or the public is at risk.

In any company or agency, all over the world, there are rules established to conduct business requiring responsibilities from the employer, employees and the customers. The roles of each are different but they are essential to the relationship. This is also true for our agency. For a fee, Tri-Met offers a service that's available to transport passengers around the tri-county area. The responsibility of the passenger is to purchase and maintain a proof of purchase, which is their fare. Without valid and proper fare, the service is not available.

As a Fare Inspector, how can I conduct my responsibility if I've been given the authority to check for valid and proper fare but the customer refuses to participate in their share of the responsibility? If I then need Identification to issue a warning or citation for the violation and the individual is uncooperative or falsely identify themselves, I cannot proceed in issuing the warning or citation, since the violation will be issued to the wrong or non-existing person. In this situation I believe it would be permissible for a police officer to have the authority to check for proof of valid and proper fare. This will determine the integrity of all parties involved.

A police officer should be able to support and intervene for all citizens, again, regardless of race, ethnicity, economic or social status...and I'd like to think that I'm included in that as well.

Also, please consider the recent efforts that Tri-Met has made to make the transit system more accessible with the low-income program and new administrative options.

Stop HB 4097

Thank you