

To: House Subcommittee on Civil Law

From: Don Loving and Mary Botkin, representing the Amalgamated Transit Union Local 757

Chair Power and Members of the Committee,

The Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) presents this testimony in opposition to HB 2482. Specifically, ATU is opposed to the portion of HB 2482 that “removes entering or remaining unlawfully in or on public transit vehicle or public transit station as manner of committing crime of interfering with public transportation.”

We wish to note that ATU has a traditionally good working relationship with OPAL, and we are generally supportive of each other. We can even agree that in theory, a fare-free public transportation system sounds ideal in a global sense. ATU supports increasing access to Transit, but a more comprehensive conversation is needed to ensure adequate support for passengers and our workers. But we must face practical realities, and there are issues with the language in this bill.

ATU represents members at both TriMet and the Lane Transit District that perform fare inspections on TriMet’s MAX and LTD’s BRT systems, so this bill would greatly impact their ability to do their job. In fact, we are concerned that this language is so restrictive, it is possible that bus operators may not even be able to validate fares on buses.

HB 2482, as written, removes an important tool that transit agencies implement to both enforce fares and simply move folks along at transit centers. This is crucial at two levels:

- **Public Safety.** If the agencies are left with fewer options to remove chronic fare evaders or folks lingering at transit stations/transit centers, it could create an unsafe environment for our operators, other assorted employees and the general public.

- **Revenue.** Fares are a critical revenue stream for most transit agencies. Implementing the language contained in HB 2482 without accompanying replacement revenue could lead to staff reductions for our membership. We don’t need to remind you that everyone is struggling to regain financial stability as we crawl out of the COVID situation.

In summation, ATU Local 757 is opposed to HB 2482 as written. We urge the committee to either amend the bill to meet our concerns or simply vote against moving it forward.

Thank you.