

NEW YORK CITY TRANSPORTATION SAFETY COALITION

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NYC
TRANSPORTATION
SAFETY
COALITION
MEMBERS
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NYC Transportation Safety Coalition Demands Rider Safety Remain a Priority in the Face of Dire MTA Cutbacks

RightRides for
Women's Safety

Girls for Gender
Equity

HollaBack NYC

National
Organization for
Women - NYC

Chai Shenoy, Esq.

November 24, 2008 (New York) – The New York City Transportation Safety Coalition is alarmed by the dramatic cuts to personnel and services proposed by the MTA and its potential impact on rider safety. For most New Yorkers, not taking the subway or bus isn't an option. The Executive Director of the authority, Elliot G. Sander, claims that none of the cuts will affect passenger safety. However, it's unclear how the elimination of up to 12 bus lines and multiple subway lines, reduced trains at late night hours, closed station booths and fewer personnel won't have a direct and negative impact on safety.

NOW-NYC President Sonia Ossorio says, "The coalition will remain a vigilant and vocal force to ensure that safety isn't tossed out the train window just because of budget cuts."

Oraia Reid, Executive Director of RightRides for Women's Safety—which provides free rides for women at night—notes, "Women who rely on taking the subway late at night will now have to wait longer at desolate stations. In many neighborhoods where transit service will be cut, women will now have to walk further to get home. The MTA must make rider safety a priority for those who rely on public transit, regardless of budget cuts."

For example, Sonia Ossorio, President of NOW-NYC, highlights just how critical access to personnel on the subway can be: "Two teenagers from Mexico had just escaped the brothel where they were forced into prostitution, and they were riding the subway in Queens, scared and unsure of what to do. It was the people on the train and the personnel on-hand who came to their rescue. This is only one of many examples of why it's imperative that platforms and booths are fully-staffed."

Joanne Smith, Executive Director of Girls for Gender Equity adds, "The MTA and NYPD have responsibility to protect minors from sexual harassment and sexual assault while they ride the subway. Now is not the time to cut critical services for the most vulnerable of MTA commuters."

Last year Manhattan Borough President, Scott Stringer, released a report that indicated an alarmingly high number of New Yorkers have been harassed or assaulted on the subway. In 2008, Transportation Safety Coalition Members successfully convinced the MTA to implement a safety awareness campaign, which was released in September with 2,000 posters in 300 subway cars.

The New York City Transportation Safety Coalition is a collection of advocacy organizations and advocates dedicated to reducing harassment and assaults—particularly gender or discrimination based—on public transportation in New York City. The coalition focuses on raising public awareness and facilitating changes that will make sure New Yorkers can get to work, school, and home safely and securely.

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