



Straphangers Campaign

9 Murray Street, 3rd floor, New York, NY 10007-2272 • (212) 349-6460 • FAX (212) 349-1366

A. 2236/S. 7108

MEMO IN SUPPORT: Transit Posters

(M. of A. Nolan, Kaufman, Englebright, Harenberg/Senator Padavan)

AN ACT to amend the public authorities law, in relation to establishing performance indicator posters for the purpose of reporting indicators of the quality and quantity of service on rapid transit routes operated by the New York city transit authority, and the Long Island Rail Road and the Metro-North Commuter Railroad

SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION: This bill would require the Metropolitan Transportation Authority to post “performance indicator posters” at subway and commuter rail stations and on its buses. The posters would contain agency-generated statistics on the quality of service for the subway and commuter line (or lines) stopping at that station. This would include how often trains break down, as well as crowding levels, frequency and regularity of service, cleanliness and quality of announcements.. The posters would contain “simple charts and graphics to enhance ease of understanding by passengers” and would compare a line or route’s performance to the system average. The agency would have to develop an “equivalent” system for its buses.

STATEMENT IN SUPPORT: Transit officials currently produce useful statistics on a variety of aspects of subway, commuter rail and bus service, from how often trains and buses breakdown to the regularity of service. The NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign strongly supports giving subway, commuter rail and bus riders basic information on how their line or route is performing.

Posting service indicators would help inform the riding public, treating them much the way a well-run business treats its customers.

A majority of subway riders want this information, according to a 1998 MTA New York City Transit opinion poll. That survey found that “55% of customers would like service information to be posted” even when asked to weigh posting in the context of competing spending priorities. The riders polled supported the basic thrust of A. 2236: “Customers have interest in knowing how their line, as well as the overall system, is doing.” Riders in the poll focused on getting information on “how well the line keeps to schedules, how much service is scheduled and how well announcements are made.”

In addition, performance posters would also serve to hold transit managers accountable, including the superintendents for each subway and commuter rail line and for bus route managers. Other systems provide information on service quality directly to riders. For example, the London Underground periodically posts service indicators in their stations—and even sets standards of service against which to rate its performance.

Printing and posting service information would cost little. MTA New York City Transit already frequently and extensively posts information on service changes in stations and on buses.

An identical bill—S.7108—has been introduced by Senator Frank Padavan.

For more information, contact: Gene Russianoff (212) 349-6460