

BUS RIDERS' BILL OF RIGHTS

WHEREAS, New Jersey (State) is the most densely populated state in the country, and its people and economy depend on access to a modern and efficient transit network; and

WHEREAS, people in New Jersey have long relied on public transportation to get to jobs and appointments, go shopping, visiting family and friends, and enjoy the freedom of movement; and

WHEREAS, while much of the public's attention has focused on commuter rail and light rail systems, the bus system has been neglected in this regard; and

WHEREAS, buses serve more passengers than rail and buses serve more municipalities than rail; and

WHEREAS, bus service remains the most affordable transportation option in many communities; and

WHEREAS, buses reduce inequalities in Black and Brown communities by providing access to public transit and, via transit, to healthier food, good jobs, and affordable housing; and

THEREFORE, bus passengers are henceforth entitled to a Bus Riders' Bill of Rights. Under the provisions of this bill, a person on a passenger bus operated by New Jersey Transit or any other provider contracted by New Jersey Transit to provide bus passenger service (NJ Transit) operating on a regularly scheduled route in this State, or between points in this State and points in other states, would have the right to reliable, affordable, and on-time transportation; accurate and timely information about bus arrival times and service delays; clear communication about service changes and reductions; protection against discrimination based on race, color, or national origin per Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; accommodations for disabilities as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act; and safe buses, bus stops, and bus terminals; and

Under the bill's provisions, NJ Transit would be required to provide its bus passengers with:

- (1) A sufficient number of buses operating seven days a week to accommodate every customer;
- (2) Clear audio and/or visual communication in advance of arriving at a bus stop about arrivals, departures, delays, service changes, service implications, and alternate routes at all impacted bus stops along the route, website, and electronic forms of communication;
- (3) Accurate, open-sourced data published at a regular frequency, covering topics including but not limited to: ridership numbers and on-time performance based on published scheduled departure times, using a standard of no less than six minutes from bus terminal departure, intermediate points along the bus route, and end of route arrival;
- (4) Bus schedules and routes evaluated and adjusted at least every twelve months based on bus ridership metrics;
- (5) Up-to-date maps of bus routes and schedules in printed form, including braille, and electronic form, as well as preferred languages, on NJ Transit's buses, website, mobile app, and wayfinding maps at bus stops along the route;
- (6) Sanitized, well-maintained vehicles with functioning level boarding that meet CDC and State COVID reopening requirements, safety, and vehicle inspection requirements, and offer priority seating areas for passengers with disabilities;
- (7) Proper safety equipment and training to protect bus operators and riders, and a commitment from riders to protect themselves and their fellow passengers and staff by adhering to all safety requirements and regulations;
- (8) Bus operators who must be regularly trained in: COVID safety requirements, operating accessibility equipment such as lifts or

ramps and wheelchair securement, laws pertaining to service animals, and proper procedures in dealing with passengers who have any type of disability;

(9) Commitment to a modern fare payment system that allows passengers to use mobile applications, reloadable passes, bank cards, or cash;

(10) Fares that meet the needs of all customers, based on age, socioeconomic status, and disability, and fare hikes that are only enacted as a last resort, and only after the proper statutory public process, when all other funding options have been exhausted, as well as stable funding for NJ Transit from the state to allow for service improvements and system expansion.