



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Kristen Gonzalez

## NYS Senator Kristen Gonzalez's Testimony on the MTA's Proposed Fare Hike

KRISTEN GONZALEZ August 19, 2025

| ISSUE: **MTA, AFFORDABILITY**

As a State Senator representing Western Queens, North Brooklyn and the East side of Manhattan I write today to urge the MTA to prioritize affordability when considering changes to the fare structure. My three-borough district includes some of the busiest transit hubs in the city. On any given day, almost 100,000 riders use the Queensboro Plaza station. And that's just one of the hundreds of MTA subway stations, LIRR stations and bus stops that my highly transit-oriented constituents depend on.

Everywhere I look, I see New Yorkers struggling with the cost of living. From housing to groceries to energy bills, prices are going up. We should not add public transit to that list.

That's why I'm urging the MTA to keep the fare at \$2.90. Instead of further burdening families with increased prices mass transit, now is the time to make New Yorkers' lives easier.

As a long-time advocate for transit access, I believe public transit, like all public services, should be accessible to ALL New Yorkers. Every single time the MTA increases the fare, we move farther from this goal and leave more people behind.

The MTA calls a 4% increase every other year “modest,” but it isn’t modest for those who are already struggling to make ends meet. According to a Community Service Society survey released in 2024, one in five New Yorkers reported struggling to afford the current fare. Additionally, survey data shows that affordability hardship is increasing among moderate and high-income households, those that do not qualify for subsidies like Fair Fares.

I also urge the MTA to reconsider phasing out the 30-day unlimited pass. We know some families use unlimited passes collectively, a solution that is in line with MTA policy and saves families hundreds in transit costs each year.

We need a yes AND solution to making fares easier to navigate for riders. MTA can still implement the 12-ride cap on OMNY and preserve the 30-day unlimited pass by adding an unlimited pass option to OMNY. The fare cap will still be available to those who cannot pay up front, and families will retain access to the predictable, cost-effective option they’re used to.

Throughout the public comment period, I know you’ll hear from every day New Yorkers, elected officials, advocates and more about the negative impact this fare increase will have on those who depend on the MTA. I have seen firsthand how hard the MTA team is working to provide the best service, and that’s why I’ve been supportive of increasing its budget.

However, the cost of these rate hikes on quality-of-life for everyday New Yorkers far outweighs the revenue that may be gained.

New York City has the best transit system in the country, and we can have the best transit system in the world. But to get there, we must build a reliable, affordable system that is accessible and affordable for everyone.