



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pedro Espada Jr.

Espada Renews Call for Tolls as Students Citywide Walk Out

PEDRO ESPADA, JR. June 11, 2010

| ISSUE: **EDUCATION, MTA (METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY)**

In Midst of Citywide Student Walk-Out, Espada Renews Call for Toll on East River Bridges to Save Free Student MetroCard

As hundreds of students from 23 high schools in the Bronx, Brooklyn and Queens were participating in a walk-out to protest the proposed elimination of free transportation, New York State Senate Majority Leader Pedro Espada, Jr. today renewed his call for a toll on the four East River bridges to save the free student MetroCard program. Espada joined students at Roosevelt High School, just blocks from his district office in the Fordham Road section of the Bronx, in support of their walk-out before the students hopped on the subway to a City Hall rally.

Espada is proposing a \$2.00 toll each way on the four East River bridges, including the Brooklyn, Manhattan, Williamsburg and Queensboro bridges. The toll would generate \$525 million annually, enough revenue, Espada said, for the cash-strapped MTA to save the free rides to and from school for the more than 600,000 students currently enrolled in the MetroCard program.

“The revenue generated by a toll on the East River bridges would be earmarked specifically to save the free student MetroCard program, and would not be used for MTA salaries or administrative costs. Any leftover revenue would be used to save projected service cuts and

restore cuts already made,” Espada said.

“Families are struggling as it is during these difficult economic times. The last thing we need do is burden parents with the cost of having to pay for their children to get to school. An East River bridge toll is a sensible and much-needed solution that insures getting our children to school and in their classrooms every day,” Espada said. #