



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jack M. Martins

## Senate Passes Bill That Extends Time to Use Train Tickets and Eliminates Refund Charges

JACK M. MARTINS May 16, 2012

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Common sense legislation, sponsored by Senator Jack M. Martins, to repeal a processing fee for customers to refund unused Long Island Railroad tickets received wide bi-partisan support as it passed the Senate unanimously Tuesday by a 60-0 vote.

Currently, a customer who purchases a LIRR ticket and doesn't use it has to pay a \$10 processing fee just to receive a refund. In many cases, the refund costs more than the ticket

itself. In addition, the current policy gives customers only 14 days to use a ticket or 30 days to seek a refund. Senator Martins' bill (S.3778D) eliminates the \$10 processing fee to return an unused ticket and gives customers a full six months after the purchase date to either use the ticket or receive a full refund.

"This legislation sends a clear message that the Long Island Railroad has to be more customer friendly. To charge a customer a processing fee that, in many cases, costs more than the ticket is appalling and defies common sense," said Senator Martins. "If the ticket is purchased and not used, the customer should be entitled to a refund, period."

Right now, a one-ticket to Manhattan on the Long Island Railroad from stations in the Seventh Senate District costs either \$7.25 or \$8.25 during off-peak hours depending on the station. If a customer were to purchase a ticket and not use it, the amount of the refund would be deducted from the \$10 fee so that it would actually cost the customer a \$2.75 to \$3.75 penalty over the initial purchase price of the ticket just to return it. Essentially, the MTA, with its \$10 processing fee, has a non-refund policy for unused train tickets.

"Customers have had to deal fare increases and service cuts. To put in a processing fee just to return a ticket for a refund is just another slap in the face to our residents who need to use the railroad. This fee should never have been instituted. It discourages mass transportation at a time when we need mass transit to serve customers efficiently and fairly," said Senator Martins.

The MTA Board adopted the policy concerning the \$10 processing fee for refunds on December 30. Senator Martins' bill to repeal it was also passed last year but failed to pass the Assembly. Senator Martins is hopeful the Assembly will take up the bill this year so that it lands on the Governor's desk for his signature.