

**BRONX INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES · BROOKLYN CENTER FOR INDEPENDENCE OF THE DISABLED · CENTER FOR INDEPENDENCE OF THE DISABLED, NEW YORK · DISABILITY RIGHTS NEW YORK · DISABLED IN ACTION-METROPOLITAN NEW YORK · 504 DEMOCRATIC CLUB · HARLEM INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTER · MFY LEGAL SERVICES, INC. · NEW YORK LAWYERS FOR THE PUBLIC INTEREST · STATEN ISLAND CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING**

## **Statement of disability groups applauding MTA's decision to keep base fare at \$2.75**

January 25, 2017

Today's decision by the MTA Board to keep the base fare at \$2.75 is a tremendous victory for Access-A-Ride riders, who otherwise would have paid a higher percentage increase than other transit users.

Our 10 disability groups yesterday wrote Governor Cuomo, who controls the MTA, to urge him to keep the base fare at \$2.75. The proposed increase to \$3 would have had a big impact on Access-A-Ride riders, who already struggle to pay the fare and who must put up with the worst service in the transit system. Our groups also wrote Mayor deBlasio, who has three MTA board members.

We applaud Governor Cuomo and the MTA's leadership for making the right decision for Access-A-Ride users. We also thank Mayor deBlasio's MTA board appointees, who voted with other board members to keep the \$2.75 base fare.

MTA Chair Thomas Prendergast credited Access-A-Ride advocates for influencing the decision, noting that the impact on the Access-A-Ride fare was "absolutely" a factor in the decision. At a news conference after the vote, Prendergast cited "comments and letters later in the process" as making a difference.

The letter's signatories praised the vote to keep the Access-A-Ride fare at \$2.75:

"Hallalujah!" said Joseph G. Rappaport, Executive Director of the Brooklyn Center for Independence of the Disabled, who spoke at the MTA meeting. "Governor Cuomo and the MTA definitely made the right call for Access-A-Ride users and other low-income riders."

Ruth Lowenkron, Director of the Disability Justice Program at New York Lawyers for the Public Interest said: "NYLPI appreciates the fair fare. The budget cannot be balanced on the backs of persons with disabilities."

"This is a big win for the consumers we serve every day," said Brett Eisenberg, Executive Director of the Bronx Independent Living Services.

"We are gratified that the MTA Board did the right thing," said Susan M. Dooha, Executive Director of the Center for Independence of the Disabled, New York (CIDNY).

"This is a tremendous relief for people with disabilities who often struggle to make ends meet," said Jeanette Zelhof, the Executive Director of MFY Legal Services, Inc.

"DRNY applauds the MTA Board for voting to reject the proposed fare increase, which would have negatively and disproportionately harmed people with disabilities who use New York City's Access-A-Ride system," said Elizabeth Grossman, Director, PAIR & PABSS Programs at Disability Rights New York.

"This is what happens when advocates and regular people speak out and government listens," said Edith Prentiss, President of the 504 Democratic Club.

See above for other groups which signed on to the letter. For more information, contact Joe Rappaport at 646-284-1078.