

The Rapid Intervention and Deterrence for Enhanced Rider (RIDER) Safety Act

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Problem:

Transit systems across the country are experiencing a rise in public safety concerns, including assaults on transit operators. Without trained personnel dedicated to de-escalation and engagement, both operators and riders can be left vulnerable to conflict and harm. At the same time, staffing shortages in many law enforcement agencies limit officers' capacity to respond effectively to non-emergency threats, adding further strain on public safety resources.

Solution:

Transit support specialists are unarmed and uniformed personnel that engage positively with riders and staff, deter disruptive behavior, and report incidents to enforcement authorities.

The **RIDER Safety Act** would:

- Allow transit agencies to use operating grants, via amending the crime prevention and security authority (49 U.S. Code § 5321), for the hiring and training of transit support specialists. These specialists are trained in de-escalation, crisis response, and rider education and engagement.
- Create good, stable jobs in local communities. These jobs provide meaningful work, training opportunities, and a pathway to career growth. Hiring transit support specialists supports workforce development while enhancing public safety.

Why Transit Support Specialists work:

- They provide a visible, non-enforcement presence to deter low-level incidents and reduce tensions before they escalate. They supplement, rather than replace, law enforcement, freeing officers to focus on more serious crimes.
- They act as the eyes and ears on transit, reporting criminal activity in real time and maintaining direct communication with law enforcement and crisis teams to prevent and respond to incidents.

This common-sense approach has already demonstrated success by improving public safety, easing the burden on law enforcement, and fostering a more respectful transit environment in California's Bay Area. Investing in transit support specialists is investing in safer, more reliable public transportation.

Endorsed by: Amalgamated Transit Union, Transport Workers Union, International Brotherhood of Teamsters, AFL-CIO (Transportation Trades Department), American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, Transportation Communications International Union, SFMTA, SMART-TD, LA Metro, Bay Area Rapid Transit, and AC Transit.

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