



**Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515**

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May 9, 2024

Ms. Veronica Vanterpool
Acting Administrator
Federal Transit Administration
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Acting Administrator Vanterpool:

We are concerned by the recent spike in reports of violent crime and assaults on our Nation’s major transit systems.¹ The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) maintains five strategic goals, the first of which states, “FTA is committed to improving safety ... for riders and patrons who use transit, workers who maintain and operate transit, and pedestrians and others who interact with transit.”² At a time when criminal activity on transit systems and in transit facilities is rising, it is vital that FTA provide appropriate safety and security measures and direction to counter this dangerous trend.³ Accordingly, we seek information about FTA’s actions taken in response to this rise in crime on transit systems and plans to ensure the safety of transit riders and workers.

According to the Bureau of Transportation Statistics, from 2020 to 2022 reports of homicides on urban transit systems increased by 61 percent, assaults increased by 70 percent,

¹ See e.g. Jennifer A. Kingson, *Violent Assaults on Transit Workers Are On the Rise*, AXIOS (Jan. 22, 2024), available at <https://www.axios.com/2024/01/22/crime-violence-public-transportation-statistics-workers>; Molly Bohannon, *NYC’s Subway Violence: Here’s What Caused a New National Guard Crackdown*, FORBES, (Mar. 6, 2024), available at <https://www.forbes.com/sites/mollybohannon/2024/03/06/nycs-subway-violence-heres-what-caused-a-new-national-guard-crackdown/?sh=5e7fd4f27eca>; Aaron Katersky, et. al, *Rise in Mass Transit Crime has LA Officials Searching for Solutions*, ABCNEWS, (Apr. 4, 2024), available at <https://abcnews.go.com/US/rise-mass-transit-crime-la-officials-searching-solutions/story?id=108745419>.

² U.S. DEP’T OF TRANSP., FTA, *Mission, Vision, Values, and Goals*, (last updated Feb. 2, 2023), available at <https://www.transit.dot.gov/about/mission-vision-values-and-goals>.

³ U.S. DEP’T OF TRANSP., BUREAU OF TRANSP. STATISTICS, *Security Events of Crime by Transit Mode*, (last accessed May 9, 2024), available at <https://www.bts.gov/content/reports-violent-crime-property-crime-and-arrests-transit-mode>.

and other crimes, including burglary, increased by 34 percent.⁴ In just the past six months alone, violent, and deadly assaults were reported on transit vehicles or in transit stations in Los Angeles, Denver, Houston, and Washington, DC.⁵ Also, in March of this year, the Philadelphia transit system experienced four shootings over four days that left three dead and twelve wounded.⁶ Additionally, from December 2023 to February 2024, criminal acts in Chicago included the sexual assault of a teenager aboard a Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) train, three people being attacked by one assailant over a two-day period inside CTA stations, and a 61-year-old being beaten to death aboard a CTA train.⁷

And in New York City, crime in Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) facilities and vehicles has been shocking. Violent incidents included a victim slashed with a boxcutter, a subway conductor attacked pulling into a station, a deadly assault during the morning commute, six victims – one fatally shot – during an incident on a Bronx subway platform, a subway performer assaulted during rush hour, an unprovoked beating with a metal pipe, a second MTA

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ Vivian Chow, *1 Killed at South Los Angeles Metro Station; Suspect at Large*, KTLA5, (Dec. 30, 2023), available at <https://kfla.com/news/local-news/1-killed-at-south-los-angeles-metro-station-suspect-at-large/>; see also, Nate Lynn, *Man Killed in RTD Bus Shooting Identified*, 9NEWS, (Feb. 2, 2023), available at <https://www.9news.com/article/news/crime/shooting-bus-denver/73-611b9e13-1f03-4e1a-9651-651b6f61e67b>; see also, Rachel Estrada, *Fatal Stabbing on Houston Metro Train Sparks Homicide Investigation*, CW39 HOUSTON, (Jan. 8, 2024), available at <https://cw39.com/crime/fatal-stabbing-on-houston-metro-train-sparks-homicide-investigation/>; see also, Peter Herman and Emily Davies, *Teenager fatally shot in D.C.'s Brookland Metro station*, WASHINGTON POST, (April 4, 2024), available at <https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2024/04/04/brookland-metro-shooting-bypass/>.

⁶ Ron Todt, *8 Teens Wounded by Gunfire at Philadelphia Bus Stop in City's 4th Transit Shooting in as Many Days*, AP NEWS, (Mar. 6, 2024), available at <https://apnews.com/article/philadelphia-septa-bus-fatal-shooting-7b477ff1b7546817393bbf2e7ac9d60d>.

⁷ See e.g., Sophie Sherry, *Austin Man Charged with Sexually Assaulting 16-year-old Girl on Purple Line Train: 'bold, brazen, criminal act'*, CHICAGO SUN-TIMES, (Feb. 27, 2024), available at <https://chicago.suntimes.com/2024/02/26/girl-16-sexually-assaulted-purple-line>; Suzanne Le Mignot, *Crisis Responder Says He Witnessed Suspect Attack Three People on CTA*, CBS NEWS, (Dec. 21, 2023), available at <https://www.cbsnews.com/chicago/news/crisis-responder-suspect-attack-cta/>; John Dodge, *Woman Who Was Attacked on CTA Red Line Has Died*, CBS NEWS, (Jan. 16, 2024), available at <https://www.cbsnews.com/chicago/news/woman-who-was-attacked-on-cta-red-line-has-died/>.

worker assaulted with a glass bottle, a rush hour altercation aboard a Brooklyn-bound train that ended in gunfire, and two separate incidents of victims being pushed onto subway tracks.⁸

While millions of Americans ride transit systems daily without incident, the brazenness of these attacks and other incidents, and their geographic diversity, has justifiably diminished public trust in transit safety Nationwide and resulted in unprecedented policy changes in some communities.⁹ For example, New York Governor Kathy Hochul recently announced the deployment of 1000 members of state personnel, including 750 National Guard members, to aid in patrolling the New York City subways.¹⁰ In Chicago, Illinois, the head of the largest union of Chicago transit workers called for a similar effort to improve system security.¹¹ And in Pennsylvania, Governor Josh Shapiro enacted a measure to create a special prosecutor with specific jurisdiction over criminal activity that takes place on or near the Philadelphia-based

⁸ See e.g., CBS New York Team, *NYPD Releases Image of Suspect in A Train Attack in Manhattan*, CBS NEWS, (Mar. 4, 2024), available at <https://www.cbsnews.com/newyork/news/nypd-releases-image-of-suspect-in-a-train-attack-in-manhattan/>; Myles Miller and Romney Smith, *Subway Conductor Slashed in Neck in Brooklyn Amid Uptick in Transit Violence*, NBC NEW YORK, (Feb. 29, 2024), available at <https://www.nbcnewyork.com/news/local/subway-conductor-slashing-brooklyn-rockaway-avenue/5181115/>; NBC New York Staff, *Police Search for Three Suspects After Subway Rider Killed on D Train*, NBC NEW YORK, (Feb. 23, 2024), available at <https://www.nbcnewyork.com/news/local/nyc-subway-shooting-nypd/5163071/>; Jonathon Dienst, Ida Siegal, and Tom Shea, *1 Dead, 5 Hurt in Shooting at Bronx Subway Station After Fight Breaks out on Train: NYPD*, NBC NEW YORK, (Feb. 13, 2024), available at <https://www.nbcnewyork.com/news/local/six-teens-shot-on-bronx-subway-platform-after-fight-breaks-out-on-train-police-sources/5130110/>; Amanda Woods, *Stranger Cracks Cellist Over the Head with Metal Water Bottle During Rush-hour Attack in NYC Subway Station in Shocking Video*, NEW YORK POST, (Feb. 16, 2024), available at <https://nypost.com/2024/02/16/us-news/video-shows-woman-randomly-hitting-nyc-subway-cellist/>; Desheania Andrews, Amanda Woods, and Jorge Fitz-Gibbon, *Straphanger Beaten Unconscious by Stranger with Metal Pipe in Latest NYC Subway Violence: Cops*, NEW YORK POST, (Feb. 19, 2024), available at <https://nypost.com/2024/02/19/us-news/straphanger-beaten-unconscious-by-stranger-with-metal-pipe-in-latest-nyc-subway-violence-cops/>; Amanda Geffner, *MTA Conductor Struck in Head with Glass Bottle at Bronx Station*, FOX5 NEW YORK, (Mar. 6, 2024), available at <https://www.fox5ny.com/news/mta-conductor-assaulted-bronx-subway-station>; Claire Fahy, *Man is Critically Wounded in a Shooting on a Subway Train in Brooklyn*, N.Y. TIMES, (Mar. 14, 2024), available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/14/nyregion/subway-shooting-brooklyn.html>; Natalie Neysa Alund, *Woman Loses Feet After Police Say She was Pushed onto Subway Tracks, Struck by Train in NYC*, USA Today, available at <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2024/03/11/woman-pushed-on-subway-tracks-nyc-man-arrested-nypd/72928936007/>; *Man Kicked onto Platform, Woman Punched in Violent Weekend on the Subway*, EYEWITNESS NEWS ABC7 NEW YORK, (Mar. 4, 2024), available at <https://abc7ny.com/nyc-man-pushed-onto-subway-tracks-crime-midtown-push/14489142/>.

⁹ Philip Marcelo, *Transit Crime is Back as a Top Concern in Some US Cities, and Political Leaders Have Taken Notice*, AP NEWS, (Mar. 7, 2024), available at <https://apnews.com/article/transit-subways-buses-crime-nyc-philadelphia-f26609cb9fda9f9ad32f13481c3d8b6d>.

¹⁰ Press Release, NEW YORK STATE GOVERNOR KATHY HOCHUL, *Governor Hochul Announces Five-Point Plan to Protect New Yorkers on the Subway*, (Mar. 6, 2024), available at <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-hochul-announces-five-point-plan-protect-new-yorkers-subway>.

¹¹ Todd Feurer, *Union Boss Calls for National Guard, Bag Checks on Chicago Transit System, Like in New York*, CBS NEWS, (Mar. 8, 2024), available at <https://www.cbsnews.com/chicago/news/cta-bus-drivers-union-keith-hill-national-guard-bag-checks/>.

transit system.¹² These actions are local steps taken to respond to local events, but collectively indicate a broader need for FTA policies that can protect transit riders and transit workers and quell a growing National tragedy.

Section 30012 of the *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)* (P.L. 117-58), the “Public Transportation Safety Program,” requires FTA to advance steps related to the mitigation of assaults on transit workers and develop risk reduction programs related to transit worker safety.¹³ In November 2022, FTA announced the Biden Administration’s Enhanced Transit Safety and Crime Prevention Initiative, identifying funding opportunities for crime prevention projects, operational security costs, and assault prevention procedures.¹⁴

Further, on December 20, 2023, FTA published Proposed General Directive 24-1, seeking public feedback related to proposed steps “to address the significant and continuing national-level safety risk related to assaults on transit workers.”¹⁵ These initial efforts by FTA are an important acknowledgement that the frequency and scope of these assaults necessitate consideration by the transit sector’s safety regulator. Further, when operationalized, these efforts could provide a critical focus on broader safety concerns for transit workers, riders, and other community members engaged with transit systems.

On April 9, 2024, FTA published updates to Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) regulations and an updated version of the National Public Transportation Safety Plan.¹⁶ Changes to the PTASP include improving transit worker safety involvement and engagement in safety planning and protocol development, while the National Public Transportation Safety Plan was updated to provide guidance related to vehicle and pedestrian incident mitigation and emergency practices.¹⁷

Although these updated regulations and guidance should positively impact overall transit system operations, these actions do not address rising crime across transit systems nor propose

¹² Hayden Mitman and Lauren Mayk, *Pa. Gov. Defends Controversial Plan to Appoint Special Prosecutor for Crimes on SEPTA*, NBC PHILADELPHIA, (Feb. 12, 2024), available at <https://www.nbcphiladelphia.com/news/politics/shapiro-says-controversial-septa-special-prosecutor-plan-simply-concurrent-jurisdiction/3773314/>.

¹³ Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021, Pub. L. No. 117-58, 135 Stat. 904.

¹⁴ U.S. DEP’T OF TRANSP., FTA, *Enhanced Transit Safety and Crime Prevention Initiative*, (Nov. 30, 2022), available at https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/2022-11/Enhanced-Transit-Safety-and-Crime-Prevention-Initiative-11-30-22_0.pdf.

¹⁵ Proposed General Directive 24-1: Required Actions Regarding Assaults on Transit Workers, 88 Fed. Reg. 88213, (Dec. 20, 2023), available at <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2023/12/20/2023-28002/proposed-general-directive-24-1-required-actions-regarding-assaults-on-transit-workers>.

¹⁶ News Release, U.S. DEP’T OF TRANSP., FTA, *USDOT Finalizes Important National Regulation to Promote Transit Safety and Protect Transit Workers*, (Apr. 9, 2024), available at <https://www.transit.dot.gov/about/news/usdot-finalizes-important-national-regulation-promote-transit-safety-and-protect-transit>.

¹⁷ 49 C.F.R. § 673 (2024) available at https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/2024-04/PTASP-Final-Rule-2024-04-09_0.pdf; see also, U.S. DEP’T OF TRANSP., FTA, NATIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SAFETY PLAN: VERSION 2 (Apr. 2024), available at <https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/2024-04/National-Safety-Plan-04-05-2024.pdf>.

any steps to counter the growing number of dangerous and deadly assaults. In light of the many recent reports of violent criminal activity in and around transit vehicles and facilities, we remain committed to ensuring FTA meets its stated goal of promoting safety for all users of the National transit network.

We strongly encourage FTA to consider all available necessary and applicable actions that may be taken to aid local transit agencies in improving safety and security practices and mitigation operations. As we conduct oversight of FTA's response to this unacceptable safety threat, we request responses to the following questions, as soon as possible, but no later than 5:00 p.m. ET on May 23, 2024:

1. Are FTA's data collection methods and data assessment tools effective at measuring violent crime and criminal behavior on designated Urban Area transit systems?
 - a. If so, please describe how FTA utilizes that data to promote safety improvements among federal funding assistance recipients.
 - b. If not, please detail the requirements that are needed to provide FTA with more accurate or more actionable information to counter violent crime on transit systems.
2. Please provide a detailed list of transit agencies that have been awarded funding through the Enhanced Transit Safety and Crime Prevention Initiative and the progress of their projects or operational actions related to the funding.
 - a. Please also provide a list of agencies that sought and were denied funding through this program, if any.
 - b. Provide copies of FTA training guidance or supplemental information available for Federal grantees and other transit agencies regarding safety and security best practices, protocols or other mitigation tactics to counter rising criminal activity.
 - i. How is this information disseminated and are agencies provided the tools to offer feedback about practical application of those practices and guidelines in real world scenarios?
3. Is FTA pursuing any programmatic changes, document development, new recommendations, or guidance reassessments to respond to the recent spike in reports of criminal activity on transit vehicles and in transit facilities?

Pursuant to House Rule X, clause 1(r), the Committee has jurisdiction over these issues and shall conduct appropriate oversight of these actions. This request and any documents created as a result of this request will be deemed Congressional documents of the Committee. An attachment contains additional instructions for responding to this request. When producing

Acting Administrator Vanterpool

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documents to the Committee, please deliver production sets to the Majority Staff in Room 2165 of the Rayburn House Office Building.

If you have questions related to this request please contact Ben Siegrist, Senior Professional Staff, Majority Subcommittee on Highways and Transit at (202) 225-9446. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Sam Graves
Chairman
Committee on Transportation
and Infrastructure



Eric A. "Rick" Crawford
Chairman
Subcommittee on Highways
and Transit



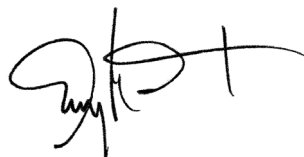
Brian Babin, D.D.S.
Member of Congress



Aaron Bean
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Mike Collins
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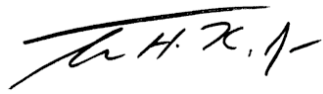


Jenniffer González-Colón
Member of Congress

Acting Administrator Vanterpool

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cc: The Honorable Rick Larsen, Ranking Member
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

The Honorable Eleanor Holmes Norton, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Highways and Transit

Enclosure

Attachment A – 118th TI Document Response Instructions