



Senate Bill 882

Transit Penalty Protections

As Introduced January 15, 2016

SUMMARY

Transit fare evasion is the number one cause of juvenile citations in Los Angeles County, according to data from the L.A. County Probation Department. Just one of these citations can result in heavy fines (up to \$250) or court appearances, which can lead to missed school or work. Throughout the state, tens of thousands of youth each year experience similar hardships. Even worse, California law allows minors to have charges brought against them for a fare evasion ticket; this may include a warrant, suspended license, and even jail time.

ISSUE

Research shows that when a youth makes even one court appearance during school, it quadruples his or her odds of being pushed out of school altogether. When means of transportation are limited, that makes it harder not only to get to school, but also to travel to court, health appointments, or a job. Furthermore, prosecution for fare evasion unnecessarily burdens public safety systems while undermining a youth's future. In contrast, increasing access to public transportation is crucial to vulnerable populations, and helps reduce traffic congestion. A few examples:

Tanisha Denard and her two siblings saw too often how their mom struggled to come up with \$100 a month to buy student metro passes for her children. But when it came to choosing transportation over housing or food, she couldn't do it. So, while Tanisha's mom had the impossible choice of buying transit passes for her kids or keeping her family from being hungry or homeless, Tanisha had to choose between walking miles through tough neighborhoods, getting a truancy ticket, or facing a penal code violation for transit fare evasion. This is how she ended up in juvenile hall.

Ademir Aguilar, a high school student in Los Angeles County, where fare evasion tickets for youth under the age of 18 average 10,000 a year, received a ticket the day after his monthly pass had expired. The ticket Ademir received, having not even realized that his pass had expired, put him into the juvenile justice system with his first conviction.

SB 882 (Hertzberg)

SB 882 prevents youth under 18 from being charged with a penal code infraction for a fare evasion citation. It does not impact the ability of transit authorities to charge and collect a financial penalty.

SUPPORT

Children's Defense Fund—California (Sponsor)
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