

Testimony of  
Eman Rimawi, Access-A-Ride Coordinator and Organizer  
New York Lawyers for the Public Interest, Disability Justice Program  
To the  
MTA Board  
Re  
Fare Increases  
December 3, 2020

Thank you for letting me share my testimony today. My name is Eman Rimawi and I work for New York Lawyers for the Public Interest as their Access-A-Ride Coordinator and Organizer.

We are living in troubling times. With a second-wave of Covid-19 looming, and economic hardships hitting the people of New York City at an alarming rate, this is not the time for a fare increase.

Many people who use Access-A-Ride live at or below the poverty level.

I remember what it was like to get a measly \$1,000 a month from Social Security, and I had to get creative in order to afford rent, food, things around the house, transportation and any emergencies. Oftentimes, Access-A-Ride barely made the cut. And I can't tell you how many times I paid my fare in pennies because it's all I had on me!

I know there currently aren't any fares being charged for using AAR, but I also know that's not permanent, which means raising the fare will eventually disproportionately hurt AAR customers who are already struggling to afford a ride.

Luckily, the City's Fair Fares program will go into effect for Access-A-Ride once the fare is put back in place. But, not everyone qualifies for Fair Fares, and they will have to pay the increased fare. That doesn't sound like equity and equality to me.

I know these are extremely hard times for the MTA, and I know the federal government has been of limited help, but I'm urging you to find other sources of funds, and not use your customers to make up the difference. We don't have the money either. Especially since I already pay \$300-400 a month for my AAR rides!

AAR users are losing jobs, housing, food and their lives, and we truly can't afford to lose anything else.