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Harvey Epstein

Assembly District 74



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Dear Neighbor,

I am happy to share with you a victory: the MTA Board has voted to eliminate the fraught half-fare student MetroCard program, which created a two-tiered system that forced some students to pay for transportation to school. Read more about how we won below.

See you around the district,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Harvey Epstein", with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Harvey

In this newsletter:

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Three Free Fares for Students



Photo Credit: Vincent Barone, AM New York

On Sunday, I joined high schoolers and transit advocates from across the city to encourage the MTA to adopt the proposal for the provision of 3-trip full-fare MetroCards to more students in time for the upcoming school year.

For the Spring semester of 2018, the MTA issued 200,500 half-fare MetroCards to the DOE for distribution to students. In order for students to use these limited, bus-only MetroCards to get to school or school-related activities, they must pay the remainder of the fare—currently \$1.35—in exact change when boarding the bus. As a result, students with these MetroCards are forced to carry \$13.50 in coins per week just to get to school and then return home.

The burden makes the MetroCards unusable for a majority of students who receive them. New York City's Department of Education data show that the existing system does not serve students well: 66 percent of half-fare MetroCards shipped to schools and distributed to students are never used. Of the half-fare cards that are used, they are used on only 8 percent of school days.

This is a social justice and equity issue for at least 130,000 students who are forced to pay to go to public school. No school-age child who travels to school and then home can realistically be expected to carry the remaining fare—a total of \$13.50 in change per week—that makes the half-fare cards useable. Students who are only eligible for half-fare cards are faced with economic hardships and dangerous situations where they may be forced to walk to school in the early hours of the morning or late at night because they do not have the remainder of the fare they need to use the MetroCard on the bus or the full fare needed for the Subway.

Due to our tireless work on this issue, I am proud to report that the MTA Board has voted in favor of the proposal and students all over NYC will be granted a 3-trip full-fare MetroCard in time for the 2019-2020 school year. I want to give a special shout out to the student advocates who worked tirelessly to help me see this through to the end.

Upcoming Events

Mobile Office Hours

Staff will be available to provide constituent services in the district on the dates below:

- **Wednesday, May 29th from 4pm-6pm** at Tompkins Square Library, [331 East 10th Street](#)
- **Saturday, June 1st from 12pm-5pm** at Carmen Pabon Garden, Avenue C between 7th and 8th Streets
- **Saturday, June 15th from 11am-4pm** at PSA 4 / Ryan-Nena Health Center Community Health Awareness Day, [130 Avenue C](#)

Please stop by to speak to my staff to voice any concerns or with any questions you may have!

Sign Up for Community Supported Agriculture Near You!

I have been a longtime member of the Sixth Street Community Center's Community Supported Agriculture program and truly believe in the benefits of CSA. Below I have listed two CSA programs either in or near our district. Check them out and sign up if you can!

The CSA is a program of the Sixth Street Community ???Center which brings fresh, organic produce grown locally in the Hudson Valley right to your backyard. Our ongoing relationship with Hepworth Farm provides guaranteed income for our farmer, and guaranteed fruit and veggie bliss for you!???

Sixth Street Community Center CSA distributes on Tuesdays from 5pm-9pm at the 6th Street Community Center, located at [638 East 6th St.](#) between Avenues B and C. The season is 24 weeks long from June 11th through November 19th. There is still time to register here: [Sixth Street CSA](#)

Turtle Bay CSA is a group of neighborhood consumers partnering with an upstate New York farm to bring fresh, organic produce and other farm products to their members at affordable prices while supporting local, sustainable farming practices. All participants volunteer their time in some way to support this farm-to-customer distribution channel.

Turtle Bay CSA distributes on Tuesdays from 5-8PM at the Vanderbilt YMCA, located at [224 East 47th St.](#) between 2nd and 3rd Aves. The season is 22 weeks long and they expect their 2019 season to run from June 11th through November 12th. There is still time to register if you would like to enjoy the bounty of farm fresh veggies, fruit, eggs, chicken, beef, honey, and maple syrup! turtlebaycsa.com / info@turtlebaycsa.com

Summer Reading Challenge!

Participate in the New York State Assembly's 2019 Summer Reading Challenge and receive a New York State Assembly Excellence in Reading certificate! Simply read 15 minutes a day for 40 days during July and August, then send your [completed form](#) to:

[250 Broadway, Suite 2234 • New York, NY 10007](#)

212-979-9696 • epsteinh@nyassembly.gov

Call my office or click the photo below for more details!

A UNIVERSE OF STORIES

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Call my office or see your teacher or librarian for more details!



In cooperation with Summer Reading at New York Libraries
www.summerreadingnys.org

In the News

MTA's half-fare bus-only MetroCard program perpetuates 'injustice,' students say

MTA May Expand Free Student MetroCard Program

NYC K-12 students to get free MetroCards?

Free MetroCards for NYC students? Here's a Look at the MTA's New Proposal

MTA Announces Significant Improvements in Subway Service, Best On-Time Performance in Five Years

Assembly should pass 'rent justice' platform

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