

H.R. 6298 (Friedman) Analysis and Recommendation

TITLE: Safe and Affordable Transit Act

SPONSOR: Representative Laura Friedman (D-CA)

CO-SPONSOR: Representative Nicole Malliotakis (R-NY)

RECOMMENDATION: Support

BACKGROUND: The BART Police Department (BPD) currently consists of 367 personnel and is funded from BART's operating budget. BART has also received federal funding from the Transit Security Grant Program (TSGP) administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and was awarded a grant from the Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Program administered by the Department of Justice (DOJ). Federal TSGP funding has supported BPD's Critical Asset Patrol (CAP) Team, security projects, and cybersecurity efforts, while the DOJ grant funded a collaboration with local nonprofit organizations to improve public safety responses and outcomes for individuals struggling with mental health and/or substance abuse disorders.

Maintaining a visible safety presence and installing new fare gates have also been key components of BART's Safe and Clean Plan to improve the rider experience. These efforts have led to sharp decreases in the number of violent crimes and property crimes month-to-month in 2025 as compared to 2024. The number of riders who say they have witnessed someone fare evade on their trip has also dropped by more than 50% in the last year.

PURPOSE: H.R. 6298, the Safe and Affordable Transit Act, would authorize the United States Department of Transportation (DOT) to provide operational grants under Title 49, Section 5307 of the United States Code to public transportation systems to be used for the following purposes:

- Hiring additional police officers to patrol public transportation vehicles and transit stations as well as the immediate vicinity of transit stations.
- Contracting with local police departments to increase officer presence on public transportation and in transit stations.
- Upgrading physical infrastructure that promotes passenger and operator safety, such as monitoring devices and operator shields.

The bill authorizes \$50 million annually for Fiscal Years 2026 through 2030 and requires DOT to work with the Transportation Research Board to conduct, in consultation with labor organizations that represent frontline transit workers, a study on crime prevention efforts by transit agencies. The bill specifies that the study shall include:

- What agencies are currently doing to prevent crime.
- What tactics have been successful or unsuccessful in deterring crime.
- Best practices for transit agencies to reduce crime within their systems.

DISTRICT IMPACT: In creating a new grant program, H.R. 6298 would make BART eligible to apply for funding to support the hiring of additional police officers and upgrades to physical safety infrastructure.

KNOWN SUPPORT/OPPOSITION: Support: Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) and Transit Workers Union (TWU). No known opposition.

STATUS: Referred to Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure.