

## H.R. 6069 (Simon) Analysis and Recommendation

**TITLE:** Rapid Intervention and Deterrence for Enhanced Rider (RIDER) Safety Act

**SPONSOR:** Representative Lateefah Simon (D-CA)

**CO-SPONSORS:** Representatives Mark DeSaulnier (D-CA), Shomari Figures (D-AL), John Garamendi (D-CA), Nellie Pou (D-NJ)

**RECOMMENDATION:** Support

**BACKGROUND:** The BART Police Department (BPD) is among the first transit police agencies in the country to create a Progressive Policing Bureau. Created in 2020, the Progressive Policing and Community Engagement Bureau (PPCEB) utilizes a mix of sworn and civilian BPD staff to bolster the department's visible presence in the system while offering more appropriate ways to respond to a range of calls for help.

The PPCEB consists of 10 Transit Ambassadors and 24 Crisis Intervention Specialists (CISs) and is funded out of BART's operating budget. Ambassadors are equipped with radios to report safety concerns and Narcan to respond to drug overdoses. CISs have backgrounds in social work and are trained to de-escalate incidents of violence and harassment. They also work to connect individuals they encounter in the system with housing and mental health support services in the five BART service counties. By responding to situations where an armed response is not needed, the PPCEB frees up armed law enforcement resources to respond to critical situations and emergencies. BART has documented a sharp decrease in the number of violent crimes and property crimes month-to-month in 2025 as compared to 2024, and the PPCEB continues to play an important role in BART's focus on maintaining a highly visible safety presence in the system.

**PURPOSE:** H.R. 6069, the RIDER Safety Act, would authorize the United States Department of Transportation (DOT) to provide operational grants under Title 49, Section 5338 of the United States Code to public transportation systems to fund "transit support specialists," defined as unarmed personnel responsible for performing a variety of duties designed to provide an added sense of security.

The responsibilities of transit support specialists would include the following:

- Monitoring transit stations and vehicles and reporting suspicious activity and security threats to transit system personnel and law enforcement.
- Assisting with and reporting medical emergencies.
- Providing rider assistance and establishing an official presence to deter disruptive behavior and security risks.
- Handling minor conflicts in order to preserve law enforcement resources for more critical incidents and emergencies.
- Connecting individuals with or performing crisis intervention services.

**DISTRICT IMPACT:** The intent of H.R. 6069 is for transit agencies that operate rider safety programs, including BART, to become eligible for federal grant funds. While the parameters of the grant program, including funding levels, are not yet specified, future amendments could be made as the bill moves as standalone legislation or is included in broader efforts such as reauthorization of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

**KNOWN SUPPORT/OPPOSITION:** None known at this time.

**STATUS:** Referred to Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure.