

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2848

To direct the Secretary of Transportation to carry out a grant program to support efforts to provide fare-free transit service, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 25, 2023

Ms. PRESSLEY introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Transportation to carry out a grant program to support efforts to provide fare-free transit service, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Freedom to Move Act”.

5 **SEC. 2. PURPOSE.**

6 The purposes of this Act are—

7 (1) to invest in State, county, and local municipi-
8 talities efforts to provide fare-free public transpor-
9 tation; and

1 (2) to support State, county, and local municipi-
2 palities in improving and expanding access to safe,
3 accessible, and reliable mass transit systems in order
4 to improve the livability of communities.

5 **SEC. 3. GRANTS TO SUPPORT FARE-FREE TRANSIT.**

6 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 360 days after the
7 date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall award
8 grants (which shall be known as “Freedom to Move
9 Grants”) to eligible entities, on a competitive basis, to
10 cover the lost fare revenue for fare-free public transpor-
11 tation and improve public transportation.

12 (b) APPLICATION.—To be eligible to receive a grant
13 under this section, an eligible entity shall submit to the
14 Secretary an application at such time, in such manner,
15 and containing such information as the Secretary may re-
16 quire, including, at a minimum, the following:

17 (1) A description of how the eligible entity
18 plans to implement fare free transit access.

19 (2) A description of how the entity will work to
20 expand and improve bus service, which may in-
21 clude—

22 (A) a bus network redesign;

23 (B) how such redesign will prioritize con-
24 sistent and reliable service for low-income and
25 historically underserved communities;

1 (C) how such redesign will prioritize
2 connectivity to critical services and improve
3 community livability; and

4 (D) how the eligible entity will meaning-
5 fully consult with community, community lead-
6 ers, local stakeholders and advocates, including
7 transit advocates and disability advocates, local
8 education agencies and institutions of higher
9 education, community developers, labor unions,
10 public housing agencies and workforce develop-
11 ment boards, while facilitating such redesign.

12 (3) A description of how the eligible entity will
13 meaningfully partner and collaborate with commu-
14 nity, community leaders, local stakeholders and ad-
15 vocates, including transit advocates and disability
16 advocates, local education agencies and institutions
17 of higher education, community developers, labor
18 unions, public housing agencies and workforce devel-
19 opment boards to support outreach efforts to in-
20 crease awareness of fare-free bus and transit pro-
21 grams.

22 (4) A description of the eligible entity's equity
23 evaluation examining any transit and mobility gaps
24 within the current transit system and how the eligi-

1 ble entity plans to significantly improve these gaps,
2 including—

3 (A) the average commute times for driver
4 commuters and non-driver commuters;

5 (B) public transit ridership rates
6 disaggregated by mode of transportation and
7 demographic group (youth (including youth in-
8 volved in the foster care system), seniors, indi-
9 viduals with disabilities, and low-income status);
10 and

11 (C) average length of bus routes and aver-
12 age delay times.

13 (5) A description of the eligible entity's current
14 fare evasion enforcement policies, including—

15 (A) the cost of the fine and whether the in-
16 fraction is considered a civil offense or a crimi-
17 nal offense punishable by imprisonment;

18 (B) the number of individuals charged with
19 violating a fare evasion policy, disaggregated by
20 age, race, gender, and disability status; and

21 (C) how the eligible entity plans to elimi-
22 nate fare evasion policies and end the criminal-
23 ization of individuals evading fares.

24 (6) An estimate of additional costs as a result
25 of increased ridership, including—

- 1 (A) fuel;
- 2 (B) personnel;
- 3 (C) maintenance; and
- 4 (D) other operational costs.

5 (7) Information and statistics on assaults on
6 transit employees and a description of trainings and
7 policies to protect employees, which may include de-
8 escalation training.

9 (c) DURATION.—Grants awarded under this section
10 shall be for a 5-year period.

11 (d) SELECTION OF ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—In car-
12 rying out the program under this section, the Secretary
13 shall award grants to eligible entities located in both rural
14 and urbanized areas.

15 (e) USES OF FUNDS.—An eligible entity that receives
16 a grant under this section shall use such grant to sup-
17 port—

18 (1) implementing a fare-free transit program;
19 and

20 (2) efforts to improve public transportation,
21 particularly in underserved communities, including
22 costs associated with efforts to provide more safe,
23 frequent, and reliable bus service, including—

24 (A) bus stop safety and accessibility im-
25 provements;

- 1 (B) pedestrian and bike shelters;
- 2 (C) signage;
- 3 (D) painted bus lanes;
- 4 (E) signal priority systems;
- 5 (F) street redesign;
- 6 (G) operational costs to meet demands of
- 7 increased ridership, including hiring and train-
- 8 ing of personnel; and
- 9 (H) conducting a bus network redesign.

10 (f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

11 (1) ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—In this section, the

12 term “eligible entity” means—

- 13 (A) a State, county, local municipality;
- 14 (B) a transit agency;
- 15 (C) a private nonprofit organization en-
- 16 gaged in public transportation in rural areas; or
- 17 (D) a partnership between entities de-
- 18 scribed in subparagraphs (A) through (C).

19 (2) UNDERSERVED COMMUNITY.—The term

20 “underserved community” means—

- 21 (A) a community not served by existing
- 22 bus routes or infrequent service; and
- 23 (B) a community located in an area within
- 24 a census tract that is identified as—
- 25 (i) a low-income community; and

1 (ii) a community of color.

2 (3) LOW-INCOME INDIVIDUALS.—The term
3 “low-income individuals” means an individual whose
4 family income is at or below 150 percent of the pov-
5 erty line (as that term is defined in section 673(2)
6 of the Community Service Block Grant Act (42
7 U.S.C. 9902(2)), including any revision required by
8 that section) for a family of the size involved.

9 (4) FOSTER CARE YOUTH.—The term “foster
10 care youth”—

11 (A) means children and youth whose care
12 and placement are the responsibility of the
13 State or Tribal agency that administers a State
14 or Tribal plan under part B or E of title IV of
15 the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 621 et seq.
16 and 670 et seq.), without regard to whether fos-
17 ter care maintenance payments are made under
18 section 472 of such Act (42 U.S.C. 672) on be-
19 half of such children and youth; and

20 (B) includes individuals who were age 13
21 or older when their care and placement were
22 the responsibility of a State or Tribal agency
23 that administered a State or Tribal plan under
24 part B or E of title IV of the Social Security
25 Act (42 U.S.C. 621 et seq. and 670 et seq.)

1 and who are no longer under the care and re-
2 sponsibility of such a State or Tribal agency,
3 without regard to any such individual's subse-
4 quent adoption, guardianship arrangement, or
5 other form of permanency outcome.

6 (5) PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION.—The term
7 “public transportation”—

8 (A) means regular, continuing shared-ride
9 surface transportation services that are open to
10 the general public or open to a segment of the
11 general public defined by age, disability, or low
12 income; and

13 (B) does not include—

14 (i) intercity passenger rail transpor-
15 tation provided by the entity described in
16 chapter 243 of title 49, United States
17 Code, (or a successor to such entity);

18 (ii) intercity bus service;

19 (iii) charter bus service;

20 (iv) school bus service;

21 (v) sightseeing service;

22 (vi) courtesy shuttle service for pa-
23 trons of one or more specific establish-
24 ments; or

1 (vii) intra-terminal or intra-facility
2 shuttle services.

3 (g) REPORT.—

4 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 3 years after
5 the date on which funds are made available to carry
6 out this section, the Secretary shall collect data from
7 eligible entities receiving a grant under this section
8 on the progress of meeting the targets described in
9 the application of such entity.

10 (2) REQUIREMENTS.—The report required
11 under paragraph (1) shall—

12 (A) collect data on demographics of com-
13 munities served under this Act, disaggregated
14 and cross-tabulated by—

15 (i) race;

16 (ii) ethnicity;

17 (iii) sex; and

18 (iv) household median income; and

19 (B) progress towards significantly closing
20 transit equity gaps as described in subsection
21 (b)(4).

22 (h) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
23 authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section

1 \$5,000,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2024 through
2 2028.

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