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## **Testimony of Council Member Jessica Lappin**

### **Metropolitan Transit Authority Public Hearing December 16, 2009**

My name is Council Member Jessica Lappin, and I represent City Council District 5, which includes the Upper East Side and Roosevelt Island.

Mass transit is the backbone of our city's infrastructure and economy. And we've seen what happens when we walk away from public transportation. It has a devastating impact on our city.

We can't return to the dark ages of public transportation, a time when many New Yorker's chose not to use our city's subways and buses; when people moved out of the city because of its deteriorating infrastructure. Yet, the cuts before you today will impact nearly every bus and subway rider in our city. And it will disproportionately impact our children and the disabled. That is unfair, unconscionable, and unacceptable.

The plan before you today is an insult to the working families in our city. Hundreds of thousands of school kids rely on the discount fare program. What you are discussing today is a regressive tax on parents. Let's call it what it is – and implement the City Council's revenue proposal instead.

I am also deeply disturbed by the MTA's plan to abandon door to door service for the disabled and to only provide transportation to the nearest handicap accessible station. Even if it is the bare minimum required by law, it is not what is fair and just.

I want to remind you that New York State recently enacted a metropolitan commuter mobility tax and increased taxi fares by 50 cents. I supported these tough measures. But I did so with the understanding that these revenue generators were adopted to AVOID these kind of cuts.

So, while I understand that the MTA is facing difficult choices and times are tough, the plan you are debating today is an unacceptable one. You made a promise to the riders – and to those who are paying these taxes – that the MTA wouldn't raise fares or severely cut service. Please keep that promise.