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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
November 23, 2008

# Heartless Proposal by MTA to Double Access-A-Ride Fares is Discrimination, Plain and Simple.

*Statement by Assembly Member Micah Z. Kellner*

“The disabilities community has long speculated that they are at the very bottom of the MTA’s priority list. This fare hike sadly confirms that fear. The TA has loudly declared: *Drop dead; we are literally leaving you out in the cold.*

“Like a good old fashion train robbery, the TA is ambushing paratransit riders because they know people with disabilities have no other transportation options. This is the most regressive fare hike the MTA has ever proposed. Those who can least afford to pay are being asked to shoulder the greatest burden in this economic crisis.

“I am thoroughly disgusted with the Metropolitan Transportation Authority’s proposal to double fares for Access-A-Ride users. While the MTA is considering raising the fare for able-bodied straphangers by as much as 50%, from \$2 to \$3; they are asking riders with disabilities to absorb an unprecedented 100% fare increase from \$2 to \$4. This is outrageous.

“The current standard of fare equality is the minimum a just society should expect. While the MTA is required by law to provide a half-fare discount to riders with physical and mental disabilities who use the regular transit system, many people with disabilities are simply unable to access buses and subways. One significant reason for this is the MTA’s choice not to invest capital into system-wide accessibility. Of the 468 subway stations in the New York City Transit system, just over 50 of these stations have elevators.

“The transportation provisions of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act cover public transportation services, like the MTA system. Public transportation authorities may not discriminate against people with disabilities in the provision of these services. So if a local transit authority chooses not to adequately serve clients with disabilities in its regular system, it is

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required by federal law to create a parallel paratransit transportation system for people with disabilities, like Access-A-Ride.

“While Access-A-Ride is critical to those who use it, the revenue that doubling this fare will bring is comparatively unimpressive; especially since the MTA has no way of knowing how much Access-A-Ride ridership will fall if this plan is enacted.

“People with disabilities face untold discrimination in their daily lives. One of the greatest examples of this is workplace discrimination, a problem which results in significantly lower household income levels for people with disabilities and their families. A \$4 base fare – which means an \$8 round trip – is likely to come at a cost too great for many of these individuals to bear. For able-bodied riders, rising fare costs is an extreme burden. For Access-A-Ride users, this may be the proverbial straw that breaks the camel’s back; sentencing thousands of New Yorkers to isolation.

“It is incomprehensible to me that in this day and age we are seriously talking about implementing a plan in which an entire class of New Yorkers is singled out for higher user fees based on their status as people with disabilities. This is unacceptable; it is wrong; and I believe it goes against the principles set forth in the Americans with Disabilities Act.”