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Are LA Metro Bus, Rail Cops Too Tough? Major Review Of Use-Of-Force

POSTED BY CONTRIBUTING EDITOR ON JUNE 25, 2020 IN CRIME | [LEAVE A RESPONSE](#)

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MyNewsLA.com com photo. By John Schreiber

The Los Angeles Metro Transportation Authority Board Thursday voted to direct staff to review the training and use-of-force policies of its policing partners and security guards and provide recommendations on reforming them.

The board also directed staff to create a Transit Public Safety Advisory Committee and allocate resources for homeless outreach and services in preparation for the expiration of the existing policing contract.

A report on the creation of the task force will come back to the board within 90 days.

People who made comments to the board said they've witnesses what they said was harassment from police officers particularly against riders who may not be able to afford the Metro fees.

Metro Board Chair and Inglewood Mayor James Butts, a former police officer

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and chief in Santa Monica, said it may be better to keep law enforcement departments more accountable, but he said deploying only people who don't have any experience with law enforcement is not the right idea.

"Having armed law enforcement officers is not inconsistent with ... compassionate, customer-oriented service," Butts said. "Advisory panels are great, but they should be involved in the construct of what we value and to advise us on what services are wanted and needed."

Butt said the board members would be "deluding ourselves" if they think that community advocates can replace all law enforcement. He said its imperative to keep police chiefs accountable of their officers' actions and train them to avoid violence when it's not merited.

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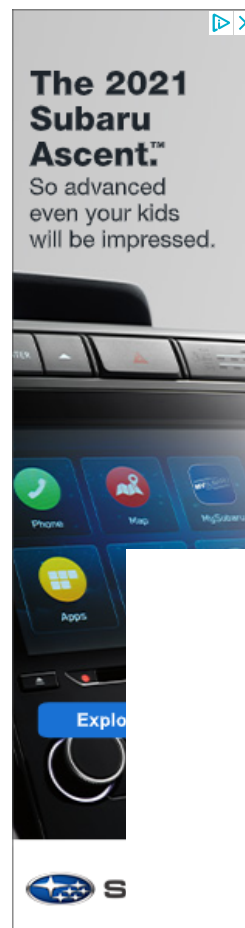
"People that lead organizations, they're responsible, and they're intelligent people, they're educated people. They can understand what needs to be done," Butts said. "It shouldn't take a Minneapolis incident for everybody say, 'Oh I get it now.' Oh, they got it all along, but what they didn't have was the courage to do what was necessary."

Mayor Eric Garcetti, who is slated to be the next Metro Board chair in July, said it's important that the board listen to its constituents during this tumultuous time of trying to reform law enforcement policies.

"We have a responsibility, obviously, as the elected representatives who are then a part of this board to make sure first and foremost that what we do is providing a better quality of life to everybody and everything," Garcetti said.

Some Metro security guards are armed, as part of an agreement with the personnel.

According to a recent Metro survey, Butts said 30% of people said they didn't feel safe, 30% of women said they experienced some form of sexual



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feels like: 84°F
wind: 8mph SSW
humidity: 48%
pressure: 29.9"hg
uv index: 9

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84/66°F	81/64°F	77/61°F
		

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harassment, and more than half of women who were surveyed said there were not enough public safety officers on the Metro system.

"They're scared to ride public transit," Butts said.

Councilman Mike Bonin said the board needs take stock of the moment and to develop better outcomes regarding law enforcement interaction.

"I think it's important to realize the moment we are in, and this nation ... is really waking up to the question, the problem, the catastrophe of systemic racism," Bonin said. "This is a big awakening in our country, so much so that the bulk of what we're discussing on our agenda would have been unimaginable."

County Supervisor Kathryn Barger said she has not felt safe on the L (Gold) Line, a bus line that travels from downtown through Pasadena and ends in Glendora, and she said she would not support creating a task force with a goal of removing police officers.

"We have not even bothered to reach out to our (train and bus) operators, who by the way, are mostly people of color, and I'd like to hear their thoughts ... in terms of the security or lack of security that they feel, even before this dialogue has been in place," Barger said.

The Bus Riders Union of Los Angeles said the creation of a committee to recommend police reforms is "weak" in trying to re-imagine public safety.

"(The board members) have been re-imagining transit racism since the MTA was formed in 1993 and the Bus Riders Union won a major civil rights case against them and won \$2.7 billion for Black and Latinx bus riders," the union stated. "But in 2006, when the decree expired, the MTA went back to transit racism with relief and enthusiasm. It's time to re-imagine a world without police on the trains and no MTA board members in their seats."

That motion was amended during the meeting to focus on policing with compassion and reasonable outcomes during interactions, and to direct the task force to adhere to a set of values that would be in place for all Metro law enforcement.

The task force will work with the Office of Civil Rights, Executive Officer for Equity & Race, and Executive Officer for Customer Experience to develop a community-based approach to public safety on the transit system, according to Metro documents.

ARE LA METRO BUS, RAIL COPS TOO TOUGH? MAJOR REVIEW OF USE-OF-FORCE was last modified: June 25th, 2020 by Contributing Editor

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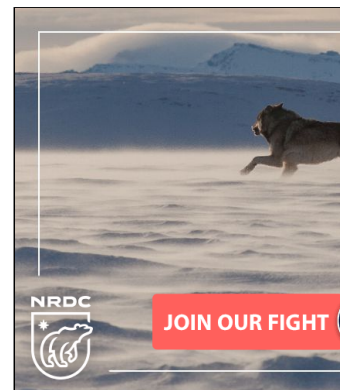


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