

# LA Metro Asks For Report On Potentially Removing Armed Officers From Buses, Trains

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**LOS ANGELES (CBSLA)** – The board of directors for the Los Angeles Metro Transportation Authority Board Thursday voted to direct staff to review of the training and use-of-force policies of its policing partners amid the growing nationwide conversation around policing issues.

The motion was proposed last week by L.A. County Supervisors Janice Hahn and Hilda Solis, along with L.A. City Councilman Mike Bonin, all members of the board of directors.

It 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.

Officials asked for a report on the creation of the task force to be completed within 90 days.



Demonstrators stand in a bus stop surrounded by members of the National Guard during a march in response to George Floyd's death on June 2, 2020 in Los Angeles. (Getty Images)

Many of those members of the public who provided comments to the board said they've seen 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

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former police officer and chief in Santa Monica, said it may be better to keep law enforcement departments more accountable, but wasn't sold on the idea of deploying only people who don't have any experience with law enforcement.

"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."

But L.A. Mayor Eric Garcetti, who is set to be the next Metro Board chair in July, urged the board to listen to its constituents as it looks 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.

Metro security is staffed by multiple agencies, including the L.A. County Sheriff's Department and L.A. and Long Beach police departments. Metro also has transit security guards and contract security workers.

Bonin says alternatives to armed officers would include a staffed transit ambassador program that includes social workers, mediators and mental health professionals.

"Around the country and all over Los Angeles, people are reimagining how to provide public safety," Bonin said in a statement. "Metro needs to be at the forefront of that, and make changes that assure that all of its passengers feel safe. That starts by acknowledging that we cannot rely on an armed police presence for every issue, and we need smarter, more effective solutions."

Metro spokesman Dave Soetoro released a statement, which said in part: "Major crimes have declined precipitously on our system over the last five years. Our police contract contains essential community relations, homeless outreach, ambassador and non-law enforcement causes that can form the basis of a future reimagining of these services. At Metro, safety is first. Metro will not compromise public safety that both our employees and customers expect and deserve."

Last week, the L.A. City Council [began debating a motion to create a "nonviolent crisis response team"](#) who would be used instead of police to respond to certain nonviolent and noncriminal calls.

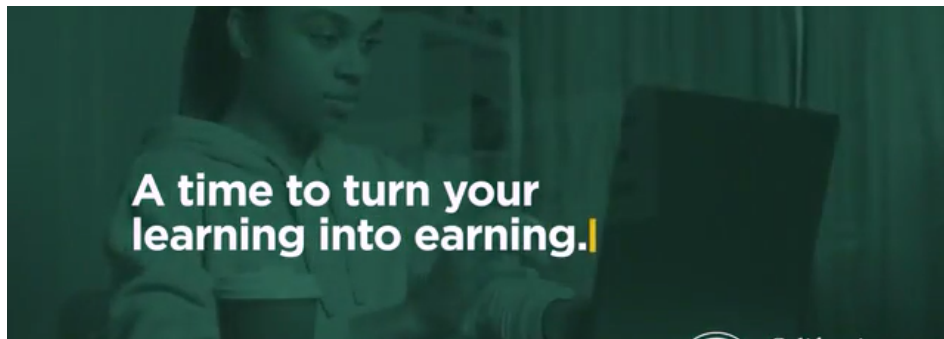


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