


Metropolitan Transportation Authority

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August 31, 2004

TO: MTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS
FROM: ROGER SNOBLE 
SUBJECT: ISSUES CONCERNING PASSENGER'S RIGHT TO BREASTFEED

The Maternal and Child Access and the Breastfeeding Task Force of Greater Los Angeles submitted a complaint concerning an incident that occurred on an MTA vehicle that allegedly violated a passenger's right to breastfeed in public. Although such complaints are extremely rare, this recent incident was the second involving the same passenger. The first complaint was received in January 2004. The incident has resulted in a protest being staged today at the Patsaouras Transit Plaza that is being portrayed as an event to heighten the public's awareness about the continuing issues of nursing mothers.

The law does not prevent breastfeeding in public nor is there an MTA policy that forbids nursing on buses. In response to the original complaint received in January, the operator was counseled. In this subsequent complaint received on August 20, 2004, the operator has now been identified and is pending a counseling session on the incident. Operations Central Instruction has been tasked with developing training plans and materials to address the issues. In addition, a bulletin has now been prepared which will be immediately posted at all operating divisions reinforcing the right of passengers to breastfeed in public. Bus operators will also be issued a copy of the bulletin along with their paychecks in the next pay period.

In summary, Operations will continue to monitor and reinforce the rights of passengers to breastfeed in public. All new hire training and annual training program materials will reinforce the rights of passengers to ensure that nursing mothers are not made uncomfortable on our vehicles.



ANTONIO R. VILLARAIGOSA
COUNCILMEMBER OF THE FOURTEENTH DISTRICT

September 1, 2004

Roger Snoble
Chief Executive Officer
Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority
One Gateway Plaza
Los Angeles, CA 90012-2952

Dear Mr. Snoble:

Earlier this year I wrote the MTA about complaints I had received regarding MTA drivers prohibiting nursing mothers from breastfeeding their children on board Metro buses. You and your staff were responsive and notified your drivers that, in accordance with the state law I authored in 1997, they were to allow breastfeeding.

In recent days I have received new complaints about continued incidents of drivers stopping mothers from breastfeeding. Yesterday this led to a demonstration being held in Patsaouras Plaza about the issue.

I ask that you or your designee meet directly with the affected mothers in order to better identify the source of the problem and take whatever steps are necessary to ensure that breastfeeding mothers can exercise their statutory right on Metro buses and trains without fear of interference or reprisal from Metro operators or staff.

In addition, please make sure that all drivers are properly instructed and that the Amalgamated Transportation Union and your service contractors are aware of the law as well.

I would appreciate your prompt attention to this matter.

Very Truly Yours,

ANTONIO R. VILLARAIGOSA
Councilmember, 14th District/Member, Board of Directors

ARV/jb

Cc: John Catoe
James Williams
Frank Roberts

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