Senate Bill 882
Transit Penalty Protections and Justice for Youth
As Introduced January 15, 2016

ISSUE
Transit fare evasion is the number one cause of juvenile citations in L.A. County, according to data from the L.A. County Probation Department. Just one of these citations can result in heavy fines (up to $250) or court appearances, which can lead to missed school or work. Even worse, California law allows minors to have charges brought against them for a fare evasion ticket; this may include a warrant, suspended license, and even jail time.

YOUTH STORIES REMIND US WE CAN DO BETTER
Tanisha Denard and her two siblings saw too often now their mom struggled to come up with the $100 a month to buy student metro passes for her kids. But when it came to choosing transportation over housing or food, she couldn’t do it. So, while Tenisha’s mom had the impossible choice of buying transit passes for her kids or keeping them from being hungry or homeless, Tanisha was having to choose between walking through tough neighborhoods, getting a truancy ticket or facing a penal code violation for transit fare evasion. This is how she ended up in Juvenile Hall.

Ademir Aguilar, a highschool student in Los Angeles County, where fare evasion tickets are the #1 cause of ticketing for youth under the age of 18, received a ticket the day after his monthly pass had expired. The ticket Ademir received, having not even realized that his pass had expired, put him into the criminal justice system with his first conviction.

Research shows that when a child makes even one court appearance during high school, it quadruples his or her odds of dropping out. When means of transportation are limited, that makes it harder to get to school, to court or to a job. Furthermore, prosecution for fare evasion unnecessarily burdens public safety systems while undermining a youth’s future. In contrast, increasing access to transportation provides an adequate support system for vulnerable populations, and results in reduced greenhouse gas emissions and less traffic congestion.

SB 882
SB 882 prevents minors from being charged with a penal code infraction for a fare evasion citation. It doesn’t impact the ability of transit authorities to charge and collect a financial penalty.

SUPPORT
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