

BUS RAPID TRANSIT ACT



BUS RAPID TRANSIT ACT Reps. Cori Bush and Jesús G. “Chuy” Garcia

The Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Act would create a grant program to fund efficient publicly-owned Bus Rapid Transit systems across the country to improve on and expand high-quality bus service. Empowering our transit systems and improving transportation more broadly is a key racial, climate, and economic justice priority. Every year, the federal government underfunds the transit systems that serve low-income and urban communities, create jobs and lower greenhouse gas emissions. It is long past time for that to change and momentum is growing. Responding to low investment, voters have taken to legislating themselves, passing 29/36, or 80% of public transit measures that were on the ballot this year.¹

The BRT Bus Rapid Transit Act fills a critical racial and economic equity need in this country. Currently, Black workers are 3 times as likely to not have a vehicle at home, and Latino and Asian Americans are over twice as likely to not own a car.² Communities of color are often dependent on public transit to get to and from school, work, and critical services. The BRT Act would help improve mobility by making investment in efficient and effective public transit options, particularly in diverse, metropolitan communities like St. Louis that are most in need.

In July 2020, while rail ridership plummeted to 23% of pre-pandemic levels, bus ridership only fell to 48% of pre-pandemic levels. It wasn't a coincidence. According to the Transit Center, 36% of all transit commuters are essential workers (e.g. grocery store workers and first responders).³ Improving bus service will disproportionately benefit Black, brown, Indigenous, and low-income communities. It will improve the lives of hundreds of thousands of people by increasing access to fresh and healthy foods, employment opportunities and jobs, and connectivity to loved ones.

Additionally, BRT systems can improve traffic patterns by avoiding traffic, thereby freeing up roads from traffic congestion. BRT systems also provide substantial benefits for the environment because bus passengers emit only 16% of the carbon dioxide emitted by car drivers.⁴

Bus Rapid Transit offers a unique opportunity to catch US transit systems up with the world by investing in the most affordable and flexible mass transit systems available, which can be paired with light rails, subways, and other technologies to improve how we all move.

The Bus Rapid Transit Act has 60 original cosponsors and is endorsed by the Sierra Club, Amalgamated Transit Union, Transportation Trades Department (AFL-CIO), Bus Riders United STL, National Association of City Transportation Officials, Climate Justice Alliance, MO Coalition for the Environment, GreenLatinos, Food & Water Watch, Grassroots Global Justice Alliance, GreenFaith, Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments, Urban Habitat, Sunrise Movement, Center for Biological Diversity, Zero Hour, inNative, Our Climate, Earthworks, Unite North Metro Denver, St. Louis DSA, Indivisible, GASP, Green New Deal Network, Evergreen Action, Breach Collective, National Council on Independent Living, Buffalo Transit Riders United.

¹<https://www.apta.com/news-publications/press-releases/releases/voters-across-the-country-support-public-transportation-at-the-ballot-box/>

² <https://www.demos.org/research/move-thrive-public-transit-and-economic-opportunity-people-color>

³ [COVID's Differing Impact on Transit Ridership – The Eno Center for Transportation \(enotrans.org\)](https://www.enotrans.org/COVIDs-Differing-Impact-on-Transit-Ridership-The-Eno-Center-for-Transportation)

⁴ [Microsoft Word - CGGC Transit bus FINAL 10-23-09 \(duke.edu\)](#)