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**COMMITTEES**  
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RULES & EXECUTIVE NOMINATIONS  
  
**APPOINTMENTS**  
CHEYNEY UNIVERSITY COUNCIL OF TRUSTEES  
PA COMMISSION ON CRIME AND DELINQUENCY  
PA HIGHER EDUCATION ASSISTANCE AGENCY  
BOARD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
PA LEGISLATIVE BLACK CAUCUS  
PA MINORITY BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
STATE EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT SYSTEM BOARD

## Senate of Pennsylvania

September 11, 2025

Dear Chairman Lawrence and Members of the SEPTA Board:

I write to formally ask that you cancel the fare increases that are planned to take effect on September 14, 2025. Now that operational funding has been secured, albeit short-term funding, fare increases should be off the table.

The proposed 21.5% fare increase is significant. The fact that SEPTA just raised fares by 7.5% in December of 2024, makes this a combined increase of 29% and an overall increase of 30.6% from 2024. Simply put, an over 30% fare increase in just 9 months is untenable and unaffordable.

Yes, there still remains long-term funding issues because of Senate Republicans' inability to negotiate an agreement on transportation funding. But to saddle the hard-working SEPTA riders with an over 30% fare increase, largely because of uncaring Republican Senators, is wrong and must be avoided.

With this increase, SEPTA would have one of the highest public transit fares in the country, tied with New York City.

Please do the math. Philadelphia city workers and Philadelphia teachers received a wage increase of 3%. The last Social Security cost of living increase was 2.5%. The Pennsylvania minimum wage remains at \$7.25 an hour (ranking it tied with 20 other states as the lowest in the country). Given the Senate Republican intransience on the issue, that number will not be going up anytime soon.

You have stated publicly, on numerous occasions, that you would not proceed with a 21.5% fare increase and a 45% service reduction if SEPTA received significant dollars. Although the recent decision to provide up to \$394 million dollars to SEPTA does not meet your total ask, it is very close to it. You have received your ask for significant dollars.

You have also stated that fare increases, and service cuts could lead to the "death spiral" of SEPTA too unaffordable to ride, and too inconvenient to access. By making dramatic fare increases of over 30%, you are certainly beginning that "death spiral".

I appreciate all your team has done to help riders during what was a challenging and confusing time, but continuing with a fare increase would be a departure from that commitment to your riders. SEPTA riders have been through enough. Do not put this unfair burden on them.

Again, I respectfully ask that you stop the proposed 21.5% fare increase from taking effect on September 14, 2025. SEPTA riders cannot afford it, and they do not deserve it.

Sincerely,

Vincent J. Hughes, Chairman  
Senate Democratic Appropriations Committee  
PA 7<sup>th</sup> Senatorial District