



Duckworth, Brown and Casey Introduce Legislation to Make Public Transit More Accessible

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), along with U.S. Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Chair Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging Chair Bob Casey (D-PA), today introduced legislation to help make public transportation systems more accessible to passengers with disabilities. The *All Stations Accessibility Program (ASAP) Act of 2021* would establish a federal grant program to support legacy transit and commuter rail authorities to upgrade existing stations to meet or exceed accessibility standards under the *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*. Companion legislation was introduced today in the U.S. House of Representatives by Congressman Jesús “Chuy” García (D-IL-04) and Congresswoman Marie Newman (D-IL-03).

“While we’ve come a long way since the ink dried on the ADA more than 30 years ago, but we still have a long way to go to make this country truly accessible, including making sure that every American can use our nation’s public transportation systems,” Duckworth said. “It’s imperative that transit systems continue to make accessibility a priority, and I’m proud to introduce the *ASAP Act* to help ensure local transit authorities have the funding they need to expedite station upgrades that meet or exceed accessibility standards.”

“Building back better means improving existing resources and systems that aren’t meeting the needs of all Americans,” said Brown. “There’s no reason that 100% of our transit systems shouldn’t meet or exceed ADA standards and I’m proud to introduce legislation that will get us there.”

“This legislation would build on the landmark *Americans with Disabilities Act* to help us build back better, making public transit more accessible and giving people with disabilities more opportunities to fully participate in their communities,” said Casey. “I urge my colleagues to support the *ASAP Act* and help us fulfill the promise of the ADA.”

“Building world-class, equitable public transportation starts by ensuring every station, bus and train across our nation is equally accessible to everyone,” said Newman. “In cities across the country, public transit represents the great connector to jobs, housing, education and opportunity, but this great public service falls short of its promise when it is not accessible to all Americans. Through the *ASAP Act of 2021*, we can provide our cities with the funding they need to ensure their public transit systems can better serve all riders, especially those with disabilities and our seniors.”

“Public transportation systems should be accessible to all Americans, especially those protected by the *Americans with Disabilities Act*. 30 years later and we still have a long way to go,” said García. “Our *All Stations Accessibility Program Act* will ensure the federal government provides the resources our local transit agencies need, including the Chicago Transit Authority, to make accessibility a reality.”

“People with disabilities still can’t fully utilize public transit across the country because of accessibility barriers,” said Karen Tamely, President and CEO of the Chicago-based disability advocacy group Access Living, and a wheelchair user. “It’s past time for our community to be able to use all forms of public transportation. Chicago has a plan to make its transit systems fully accessible, and this bill would help make that a reality while infusing money into transit systems nationwide.”

Full text of the *All Stations Accessibility Program Act of 2021* is available [here](#).

According to the Federal Transit Administration, as of 2019 nearly 20 percent of all transit stations were not ADA accessible. The *ASAP Act* would establish a discretionary grant program that supports local transit authority and commuter rail efforts to increase the number of existing accessible stations or facilities that meet or exceed accessibility design standards under the ADA for rapid rail and commuter rail systems. The program would appropriate \$10 billion over 10 years – at least \$1 billion annually – for this grant program.

This legislation is supported by the City of Chicago, Chicago Transit Authority, Metra, Access Living, American Foundation for the Blind, Paralyzed Veterans of America, National Disability Rights Network, Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund and American Council of the Blind.