

Bus Riders Union Documents Transit Hardship July 10, 2003

Bus Riders Union organizers have hit the streets to document stories of bus rider hardship. The Bus Riders Union is collecting signed testimonials from bus riders in the Lower Mainland as part of the 'Night Owl Buses: End the Curfew Now!' campaign. A testimonial is collected on a 'Public Transit Rights Violation Report Form' and signed by the bus rider – giving permission for the Bus Riders Union to add the story to the rapidly growing evidence of bus rider hardship.

“We were noticing an increase in the number of riders willing to share their stories with us,” says Yang Chang, an ‘On the Bus’ organizer with the Bus Riders Union. “Now what we at the BRU need to do is bring this incredible volume of rider experiences to TransLink, and to the media, and expose the lie that workers in this region are served by the existing Night Bus schedule.”

“When we get on the bus and tell bus riders that TransLink thinks that worker’s needs are met by buses that stop running shortly after 1:00am and start running again at 5:30am, we are met with either laughter or outrage”, explains Martha Roberts, a Bus Riders Union organizer. Roberts continues, “What we at the Bus Riders Union know is that bus riders are regularly stranded, stuck walking or taking cabs long distances. Many bus riders leave work late at night or need to be at work very early in the morning. Bus riders are losing their jobs and are forced to compromise their safety and well-being because there is no bus.”

The Bus Riders Union is planning to collect testimonials on the bus and in the community all summer, and include the stories in a presentation to TransLink in the fall. “What we are calling for is public transit 24 hours a day, seven days a week,” explains Chang. “Our grassroots research consistently demonstrates that anything less would be short of rider needs. We don’t plan on letting TransLink off the hook when it comes to providing an essential public service.”

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