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Friday, February 23, 2018

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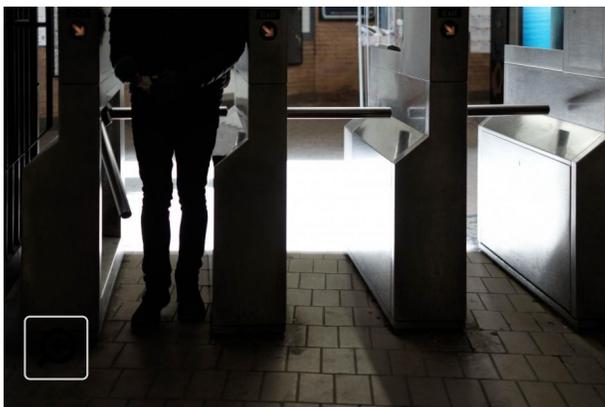


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Manhattan to Stop Prosecuting Turnstile Jumpers

By Jack Feeko



Echo Chen
 (<https://www.nyunews.com/staff/?writer=Echo%20Chen>)
 Turnstiles at the Astor Place 6 subway station.

(<https://www.nyunews.com/staff/?writer=Jack%20Feeko>), Contributing Writer
 February 15, 2018

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The Manhattan District Attorney’s office will no longer prosecute (<https://www.politico.com/states/new-york/city-hall/story/2018/02/01/manhattan-da-will-no-longer-prosecute-turnstile-jumping-229568>) people who avoid subway fares by jumping over turnstiles. The Feb. 1 decision came after the office announced in September that it would be easing up on punishments for those arrested for fare-beating.

The policy change is part of the DA’s initiative to foster equality by diminishing incarceration for low-level misdemeanors, Chief Assistant District Attorney Karen Friedman told (<https://nypost.com/2018/02/01/cops-will-stop-busting-turnstile-jumpers-source/>) the New York Post. Prior to the decision, a public defender would have to present the case before a judge.

Other public organizations were not supportive of the policy change. MTA Chairman and NYU Langone executive Joseph Lhota wrote (<https://www.amny.com/transit/turnstile-jumping-manhattan-1.16559818>) a letter to the DA’s office requesting a reversal of the decision, arguing that the threat of prosecution for turnstile jumpers helps ensure safety on the subway system and keeps prices down for those who do pay.

Mayor Bill de Blasio stated he did not support the DA’s

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decision in a recent press conference. De Blasio said (<https://nypost.com/2018/02/06/de-blasio-doesnt-like-plan-to-let-subway-turnstile-jumpers-go-free/>) that most people arrested for jumping turnstiles have sufficient cash to pay the fare. However, the Head Attorney for the Legal Aid Society Tina Luongo, has said (<https://www.politico.com/states/new-york/city-hall/story/2018/02/01/manhattan-da-will-no-longer-prosecute-turnstile-jumping-229568>) that turnstile jumping is a poverty-based crime that imposes harsh and disproportionate consequences.

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CAS freshman Kaan Uysal backs up the DA's decision.

“The District Attorney has to deal with a lot of other judicial issues, and a lot of times, time is an issue,” Uysal said. “It’s good that rather simple issues like hopping a turnstile and skipping on \$2.75 should not prevent larger issues to be solved by the prosecution.”

(<https://www.nyunews.com/2014/10/22/in-memoriam-former-wagner-dean/>)

Sometimes people who have hopped turnstiles are only warned by the police, instead of being arrested or fined. A Tisch freshman, who wished to remain anonymous, said that she was only reprimanded by police officers when she skipped out on paying her fare.

“They came down and asked me my name and for my ID,” she said. “I didn’t get a ticket because I directed the conversation elsewhere, and they just told me not to do it again.”

However, when asked if she thought the DA's decision was a good idea, she said it would probably encourage more fare beaters.

“I feel like that’s just gonna increase the amount of jumpers because they know that they won’t get in trouble for it,” she said.

Email Jack Feeko at news@nyunews.com.

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