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## TRANSPORT WORKERS UNION

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### Public Safety Advocates to MTA:

## Keep the Booths Open

For release 9:00am March 03, 2005

Advocates of public safety gathered on the steps of City Hall this morning to call for a halt in MTA plans to close 164 station booths throughout the subway system this year.

Patrick J. Lynch, President of the New York City Patrolmen's Benevolent Association, said: "The presence of a booth clerk combined with patrol by dedicated New York City police officers has been a winning combination for subway safety for decades. Booth clerks are the anchor that provides a sense of security in the massive subway system. Subway riders rely on the human presence in the booth to get a police officer or medical help when they need it. Closing booths is bad for the subway and its bad for the city."

Council Member John C. Liu, Chair of the Transportation Committee, took the MTA to task for pinching pennies on safety.

"In its single-minded drive to cut costs, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority has forgotten its core mission of providing a safe mass transit system for New Yorkers. Already, the MTA is embarking on risky experiments like computer-driven trains and the closing of 160 token booths this year. As in the tragic case of German Cabrera, who recently died while police were trying to figure out how to enter a subway station where a token booth had been closed, these so-called 'efficiency' measures can have very tragic human costs," warned Liu.

Addressing this recent tragedy, City Council Member Peter F. Vallone, Jr., Chair of the Public Safety Committee declared: "We must ensure that our police are never again denied access to any area in the subway system and that the public is allowed to exit safely and quickly in an emergency. In the past token booth operators help accomplish both these goals."

TWU Local 100 President Roger Toussaint called on communities to remain vigilant against closings.

“In the post-Madrid world, reducing the human presence in the stations is penny-wise and pound-foolish. How many tragedies will it take for the MTA to realize that this is folly? The cost of waiting to see is too high. Community groups and elected officials should set a watch over their neighborhood booths before they vanish in the dark of the night.”

Among the other public officials addressing the gathering were Council Members Margarita Lopez, Al Vann and Erik Martin-Dilan.

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