Yes on AB 17 (Holden)
California Needs a Statewide Student Transit Pass

Student transit passes provide real benefits to California’s students, transportation networks, schools, and economy. We’ve already seen great results at campuses across the state and the country — it’s time to take this win-win program statewide.

What would AB 17 do?

AB 17 (Holden) would create a statewide program to provide funds for reduced-fare or free transit passes for low-income middle, high school, and public college and university students in California. Transit agencies could apply to this program for funding to provide discounted passes to students. Advocates and legislators are considering a number of options for providing these much-needed funds.

Student transit passes by the numbers

Student transit passes can help California reach its ambitious emissions reduction goals by getting students out of their cars and increasing transit ridership:

- A 2001 study of student transit pass programs at 35 colleges and universities across the U.S. by renowned UCLA researcher Donald Shoup found ridership increased by as much as 70-200% in the first year, and 2-10 percent in subsequent years.
- The same study found the cost of getting an education was reduced by $2,000 a year per student (which equates to $2,829 in 2017 dollars) because of lower transportation expenses.
- A 2016 study of a student transit pass program in Minneapolis that the school district’s carbon footprint was reduced: estimated annual emissions were 93% lower for nitrogen oxide, 89% for particulate matter, and 59% for CO2.

Student transit passes work

Several California colleges have already implemented student transit pass programs with great results.

- At Pasadena City College, student transit ridership increased from 11% in 2009 to 47% in 2014.
- At UC Davis, student transit ridership increased by 79%.
- At Rio Hondo Community College, ridership jumped from 7% in 2009 to 46% in 2014.
- As a result of the “Any Line, Any Time” program at Santa Monica College, more than 40% of students, faculty, and staff arrive on campus by bus.
- UC Berkeley’s saw student transit mode share increase from 6% in 1997 to 27% in 2008, while the student drive-alone share fell from 16% to 7%.
Benefits for students
College is hard. Getting there shouldn’t make it harder.
A statewide program would:
- Improve student access to education and opportunity.
- Lower the cost of education by reducing students’ need to own, maintain, and park a car.
- Make it easier for students to get to jobs as well as school.

Benefits for transit agencies
Transit ridership is down in California, and that’s bad for the state.
A statewide program would:
- Increase total transit ridership.
- Fill empty seats on bus and rail lines.
- Improve transit service by increasing demand and revenue.

Benefits for schools
Schools are big generators of traffic. A statewide program would:
- Reduce the number of students who drive alone to school
- Reduce demand for parking by 400 to 1,000 spaces per campus, according to the UCLA study.
- Reduce the need for schools to build expensive parking lots and garages.

Benefits for everyone
Everyone wins when more people ride transit.
A statewide program would
- Reduce car ownership, parking demand, and traffic congestion.
- Reduce air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.
- Improve educational outcomes, strengthening California’s workforce and economy.

We support AB 17!
TransForm (co-sponsor)
Move LA (co-sponsor)
350 Bay Area
Alliance for Community Transit
American Lung Association in CA
Asian Pacific Environmental Network
Bike San Gabriel Valley
California Bicycle Coalition
California Environmental Justice Alliance
California Pan-Ethnic Health Network
California Releaf
California Walks
Catholic Charities, Diocese of Stockton
Center for Climate Change and Health
Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice
ChangeLab Solutions
Circulate San Diego
ClimatePlan
Coalition for Clean Air
Housing California
Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability
Los Angeles Business Council
Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition
Los Angeles Walks
Multicultural Communities for Mobility
The Nature Conservancy - California Chapter
NRDC
Physicians for Social Responsibility - Los Angeles
PolicyLink
Public Advocates
Safe Routes to School
San Diego bicycle Coalition
Sierra Club
Student Senate for California Community Colleges
Sunflower Alliance
Trust for Public Land