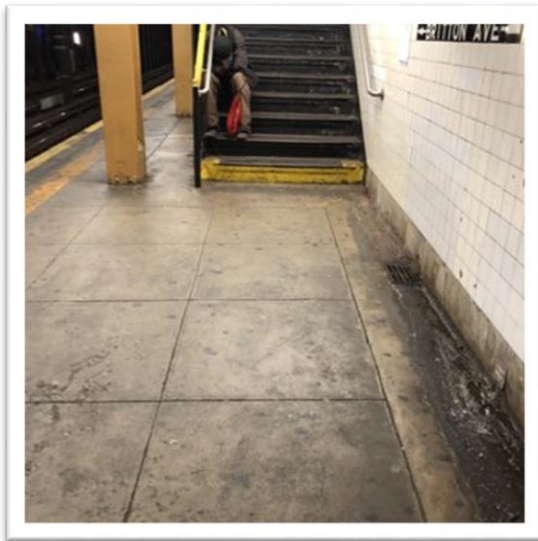


**Mariana Rodriguez**

### **HELPING THE HOMLESS**

As of recently Governor Hochul decided to increase law enforcement presence in subway stations. Due to this decision, many Soldiers have been seen in the more crowded popular stations, stopping civilians to bag check them in an attempt to decrease crime rates in subway stations. Often, you will see officers approach individuals about paying their fare. However, my community is not a part of one of the “big stations” such as time square, port authority, 34st etc., Elmhurst subway station is scary to walk through alone at night because of the volume of drunk/passed out, and possible mentally ill homeless individuals at this station where the probability of being harassed or assaulted is high and that is just being on the station once you get on the train that probability increases.

The increasing violent crime rates on the subway has caused major public panic for MTA riders because shootings and stabbings have become a regular occurrence given that there are little to no officers at the stations ensuring everyone's safety. But what about the safety



of the homeless living on the NYC transit system?

Through this neighborhood runs the E, F, R and M trains, often MTA riders come across homeless individuals begging for spare change to be able to feed themselves, or many sleeping and living on the train due to severe weather conditions. Most of these individuals tend to be mentally ill and need special services to help them overcome their harsh reality, however none of the services they need are provided to them by the city. It is stated by Ana Ley, author of [\*The New York Times\*](#) that,”

Violent attacks by homeless, mentally ill people are relatively rare, and mentally ill people are more likely to be the victim of a violent crime than to commit one” she explains further how these people seek shelter in subway stations and yet they are the victims of violent attacks by other passengers, as well as the rough tactics by police to remove them from the stations to make subway stations ”safer.”

Their situation gets worse, the population of homeless people in NYC only increases yearly due to unaffordable housing and lack of job opportunities, causing these people to lose their homes, families, medical support etc. Without these resources they have no other choice but to seek refuge with the MTA when the temperature drops below 50 degrees in NYC.

Instead of forcing them to move away from subway stations we should attempt to help them find shelters in the city where they can stay and not fear for their own safety out on the streets. NYC should attempt to provide free healthcare to these people who need it. Food should be provided to them by the city, so they do not go hungry and worsen their condition by dumpster diving.

