



The Allston-Brighton Substance Abuse Task Force

77 Warren Street • Brighton, MA 02135
Phone: 617-789-2967 • Fax: 617-562-5384
www.abdrugfree.org

January 28, 2016

Chairman Joseph Aiello
10 Park Plaza, Suite 3910
Boston, MA, 02116

Dear Chairman Aiello,

As youth leaders within our community we, the Allston Brighton Youth Coalition, are concerned about the influence that alcohol advertisements can have on us and our peers. We have spent time educating ourselves and the community on this issue in many ways. In 2012, we worked to ban alcohol advertisements on the MBTA and would like to voice support of your opposition to lift the ban. We would like to bring it to the MBTA's attention that underage alcohol consumption is a growing problem in our neighborhood, as well as other neighborhoods throughout Massachusetts, and would like to highlight the following information to demonstrate the problem of alcohol advertisements, the cost of the problem to society, and the lack of need for alcohol advertisements to return to MBTA property. We hope the following information can be utilized to convince other MBTA board members, officials, and staff not to change the current policy that is in place regarding alcohol advertisement on MBTA property.

- Research shows that greater exposure to alcohol advertising is associated with increased drinking among underage youth. One study showed, "each additional advertisement seen [above the monthly average of 22.7] increased the number of drinks consumed" for youth viewers of alcohol advertisements.¹ If the MBTA lifts the alcohol ad ban this could be problematic for Boston's youth since the majority of 7th and 8th graders ride the T daily to get to and from school.²
- In 2013, the cost of underage drinking in Massachusetts was approximately \$1.2 billion, this takes into account medical costs, work loss, and costs associated with pain and suffering.³ This is down from \$1.4 billion in 2010, when there were alcohol advertisements on the MBTA.⁴
- The Harvard Crimson recently reported that, "following the 2012 ban, the MBTA's advertisement revenue dropped by \$1 million, but has since rebounded robustly, increasing from \$11 million in 2012 to \$16 million in 2014"⁵ while the ban is still in effect. Additionally, alcohol advertisement revenue for the MBTA in 2012 before the ban was \$894,067; [only] 8.6% of total advertisement revenue and only

¹ . L.B. Snyder, F.F. Milici, M. Slater, H. Sun, and Y. Strizhakova, "Effects of Alcohol Advertising Exposure on Drinking Among Youth," *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine* 160 (2006): 18-24.

² Metzger, Andy. "Board Members Voice Concerns Over Alcohol Advertising on MBTA." *Boston.com* 15 Dec. 2015: Web. 6 Jan. 2016.

³ "Alcohol Misuse And Abuse In Massachusetts." *MassTAPP*. N.p., n.d. Web. 11 Jan. 2016.

⁴ Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation. Underage drinking in Massachusetts: the facts. Available at: <http://www.udetc.org/factsheets/MA.pdf>. Accessed July 22, 2014.

⁵ The Crimson Staff. "Fireball, Bud Light, and the T." *The Harvard Crimson*. N.p., 16 Oct. 2015. Web. 11 Jan. 2016.



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0.03% of total operating revenue for the MBTA.⁶ Therefore, the revenue generated from alcohol advertisement on the MBTA is small in comparison to the harm these advertisements have on the youth of the Commonwealth.

As such, we the Allston-Brighton Youth Coalition, support your decision to oppose a change in the current policy regarding alcohol advertisements on the MBTA.

Please feel free to contact Nicole Sforza at Nicole.Sforza@steward.org or 617-789-2140 for any follow up regarding this letter.

Thank you for your time and attention,

The Allston-Brighton Youth Coalition

⁶ Alcohol Justice. "Alcohol Advertising on Public Transit." (n.d.): n. pag. Alcohol Justice. Oct. 2013. Web. 11 Jan. 2016. <https://alcoholjustice.org/images/stories/aj_transitad_report_f_low.pdf>