

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3006

Mr. Randy Clarke
General Manager and CEO
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
300 7th St SW
Washington, DC 20024

Dear General Manager Clarke,

I am writing to you about the extremely dangerous social media trend of so-called “subway surfing,” which I understand is occurring within transit systems worldwide and has reached the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) system.

As you know, subway surfing is a social media “challenge” in which individuals, most often teenagers, film themselves while riding on top of a train car, between train cars, or otherwise engaging in dangerous behavior within a transit system. One of my young constituents, Jay Thirunarayanapuram, lost his life to this dreadful pastime on a WMATA train on June 21, 2023. He was an extraordinary artist, animal lover and athlete who had just completed his freshman year of high school in Silver Spring. His family, friends, and our entire community are reeling from the loss of this brilliant young man just a few days after his fifteenth birthday.

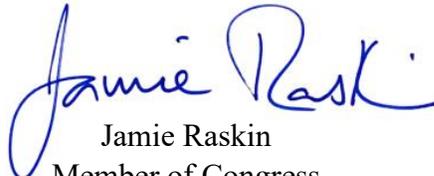
Following this catastrophe, I appreciate WMATA’s efforts to monitor CCTV footage and clarify your policies against exiting a moving train car. To prevent further injuries and deaths, could you please share any additional steps that WMATA is considering to prevent riders from engaging in this “challenge,” including further public awareness efforts? Based on the Washington Post’s article published on August 16, 2023,¹ I am fearful that incidents of people riding on tops of Metro trains may be underreported.

Please be advised that I have also reached out to the major social media companies with widespread subway surfing content urging them to do more to remove videos that glorify this danger and encourage children and teenagers—a population that is especially vulnerable to manipulation and peer pressure—to risk their lives this way. It seems to me that a two-pronged approach engaging both social media companies and transit agencies will be most effective.

¹See Joe Heim. *Increase in ‘subway surfing’ deaths prompts calls for safeguards*, The Washington Post (Aug. 16, 2023). <https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2023/08/16/subway-surfing-metro-death-mta/>.

My staff and I are available for further discussion at your convenience. We are eager to partner with you to prevent further injuries and deaths among young Metro riders in our communities, and we look forward to, and will greatly appreciate, your response.

Very truly yours,



Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress