

April 9 General Meeting Emailed Public Comment

Hello PSAC Committee Members and all those reading this,

My name is Ben Stewart. At the time of this writing, I am a contracted Security Professional via Allied Universal Security Services on the LA Metro account. I have worked on this account for approximately one year and four months, during which time I have worked morning, graveyard, and swing shifts. The majority of my tenure has been spent at the 7th Street/Metro Center station, Union Station, and on the Train Riding Teams, also known as "Surge Team." I have extensive experience working at the majority of stations particularly on the Red and Purple Lines.

If you are familiar with us guards, who wear the bright yellow Metro Security vests, you might recognize me as the Asian/Hispanic looking, fair skinned guard who usually wears a hat with a mask, and without my mask, a beard.

I am deeply passionate about safety on the Metro system, especially for passengers and for the frontline employees who serve it daily, including Allied Security Officers, Metro Ambassadors, Metro Custodians, Metro TSOs, Metro Train Operators, LAPD, LAFD, and all other contracted workers who keep this system running.

I am writing to bring to your attention a significant and ongoing reduction in Allied Security Officers over the past two months, attributed to supposed budget cuts. While the impact on our employment is a serious concern, my primary concern is public safety for everyone who uses and works on the LA Metro system. There are currently no announced plans to replace reduced contract security with additional Metro TSOs or LAPD coverage. With the Metro Public Safety Department not officially deployed until July 2026, I am asking, Who will provide safety coverage in the interim? Especially as major events for sports including baseball, football, and soccer (FIFA World Cup) are coming soon.

Most critically, the Surge Team — security officers who ride the trains to ensure passenger safety, conduct wellness checks on individuals who may be experiencing medical emergencies or overdoses, and respond rapidly to incidents throughout the Red and Purple Lines, and for the Blue and Gold Lines in the Downtown LA area — has been eliminated as a position effective April 2nd, 2026.

I am informed that this decision was made above the Metro Director overseeing the Allied contract. In total, well over 50+ guard positions have been removed from the system in the past two months alone.

I raise this because I believe daily Metro riders deserve to know. Passengers consistently tell me and my colleagues that they feel safer when we are present and wish there were more of us. That sentiment is real and it matters.

I also want to respectfully offer a perspective on the data. While I understand that metrics show reduced crime across the system, I believe that data does not fully capture prevention and deterrence — the incidents that never happen because of our visible presence. Additionally, many passengers are reluctant to report crimes, and law enforcement often cannot formally report incidents when no victim is willing to come forward. These unreported and deterred incidents do not appear in crime statistics, yet they represent real safety value that is difficult to quantify.

I believe this is a topic that deserves a deeper and serious discussion.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Respectfully,

Ben Stewart