CITY OF NEW YORK
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR
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JESSICA CHAIT
Chair

JESSE R. BODINE
District Manager

November 14th, 2025

Mr. Roger Harris
President
National Railroad Passenger Corporation
1 Massachusetts Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20001

Re: Recent Arrests at Penn Station

As members of the Manhattan Community Board 4, representing the neighborhoods adjacent to and including Penn Station, we write on behalf of the residents, workers, and visitors who pass through this vital transit hub every day. Our community includes countless LGBTQ+ New Yorkers, commuters, and travelers who deserve to feel safe, welcome, and respected in public spaces. We write out of concern and care — not only for those directly affected by recent arrests in Penn Station's men's restrooms, but for the integrity of your police department and the trust of the communities you serve.[1]

Recent reporting described a surge of arrests by Amtrak Police inside a Penn Station bathroom (twenty-three in June alone, with additional incidents since then) and at least one case in which a person was turned directly over to immigration authorities. Many of those arrested were gay or bisexual men, some simply trying to use the restroom when approached by plain-clothes officers. These reports have caused deep distress within the LGBTQ+ community and beyond, evoking painful memories of a time when policing of this kind was routine and devastating.

As you know, for decades, law enforcement across the country used "public decency" laws to entrap and shame gay men in restrooms and parks. Tens of thousands were arrested, humiliated, and publicly outed. These practices did not make anyone safer but rather served only to erode trust and dignity. And they leave us asking: which group will be targeted next?

The Amtrak Police Department operates in a jurisdiction whose own history should compel better judgment. Penn Station sits less than a mile from the site of the Stonewall uprising, where LGBTQ+ New Yorkers rose up against precisely this kind of police harassment. Continuing these practices not only violates the spirit of that legacy — it risks eroding public trust in your department. Likewise, such practice of targeting and wrongly arresting men that officers

[1] *At its regularly scheduled monthly general meeting, Manhattan Community Board 4 voted, by a vote of 45 in favor, 0 opposing, 0 abstaining, and 0 Present Not Eligible, to support the letter.*

perceive as gay constitutes unlawful discrimination and can even amount to entrapment when officers induce conduct that would not otherwise have occurred. These arrests will unnecessarily consume court time, burden prosecutors and defenders, and divert resources from real public safety priorities.

We urge the Amtrak Police Department to end these operations immediately and to conduct an independent review of recent arrests. The path forward is one of accountability, compassion, and respect for all who pass through this station.

Sincerely,

Jessica Chait
Chair
Manhattan
Community Board 4