

Prepared Testimony of Carole Ward Allen
San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District
AB 1586 (Swanson)

Senate Public Safety Committee
Mark Leno, Chairman
Rm. 4203 State Capitol
June 15, 2010

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, I am Carole Ward Allen, and I am one of nine elected Directors of the San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART).

I represent parts of Oakland and Alameda County and I serve as Chair of **BART's Police Department Review Committee**. So, it should come as no surprise that I am here today to urge your support for AB 1586 – legislation that will allow us to expeditiously move forward to authorize our BART Board to implement important citizen oversight of the BART Police Department.

I don't need to reiterate the urgent need for this bill to pass, and for BART to act as soon as we can.

We are often reminded that BART owes its community, and the riders we serve, a transparent system of police oversight. And that is what AB 1586 would allow through BART's plan :

(1) to appoint an independent police auditor to conduct important review of specific BART police actions; and

(2) to appoint an eleven member citizen review board to assist the auditor in oversight of the BART Police Department and to recommend appropriate disciplinary action -- should it be necessary.

Mr. Chairman, after months of deliberation over the past year and a half among BART Board Members and a specific Subcommittee that I established to draft a citizen oversight model – a subcommittee that included members of the community – the BART Board of Directors unanimously approved a strong proposal last August. The process to create the BART citizen oversight model included numerous public meetings, consultation with local community leaders, and a public forum that included a panel discussion by police oversight professionals from other communities in Northern California.

Assemblyman Swanson helped us by introducing this important legislation - - to authorize BART to implement our community-developed program. AB 1586 has received no negative votes in the Assembly.

The bill would not prescribe in statute *how* the public will assist in overseeing BART police actions. That effort would be left up to our elected Board, so we can continue to work with our community to develop the best program for the four counties we serve. And Mr. Chairman, I want to personally thank you and your committee staff for working closely with BART and interested parties -- providing amendments that preserve the important goal of providing permissive authority through the legislation.

Last year, BART made a promise to the Legislature -- and the communities we serve – that we would reach out to the public, get critical input and move as expeditiously as possible to implement citizen oversight of the BART Police Department. And that is what we have done.

With new authority from AB 1586, it is our hope that BART will prevent any future incidents like the one which so tragically took the life of Oscar Grant. AB 1586 will give us the authority to implement this important program.

I ask support from Committee members for this important legislation.
Thank you for your time today

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