

Adams Introduces the Saving Transit Art Resources (STAR) Act



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Adams Introduces the Saving Transit Art Resources (STAR) Act

WASHINGTON, DC – Today, Congresswoman Alma Adams (NC-12) introduced the ***Saving Transit Art Resources (STAR) Act***, which would reinstate a federal flexibility that allows local transit authorities to incorporate art into federally-funded transit projects.

“Public art is infrastructure. When incorporated into transit networks, public art increases ridership, reduces vandalism, and encourages safety and security,” **said Congresswoman Adams.** “As an artist and art professor, I know how public art inspires residents and visitors alike while contributing to a sense of place. However, due to a change in the law, transit systems across the country like the Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) are no longer able to use FTA funds to integrate art into stations and park and ride lots. The ***STAR Act*** would enable transit authorities to incorporate public art as part of their infrastructure investments, creating more vibrant and welcoming mass transit options.”

For 30 years in cities and towns—small and large—across America, transit agencies have employed artists to enhance their transit projects. These costs typically comprised 1-2 percent of a project’s budget and could be used to support the employment of an artist on a design team if artistic elements were integrated into the design or facility.

However, in 2015, Congress passed legislation that included a provision prohibiting the use of Federal Transit Administration

(FTA) funds for the incorporation of art into transit projects. In addition, once FTA funds are used for any part of a transportation project, the local funds face the same federal restrictions and probations, severely limiting the ability of local funding to go towards incorporating art into transit projects.

“Americans for the Arts is pleased to endorse the STAR Act, which will restore local control to transit authorities regarding the integration of art and non-functional landscaping into federally funded transit projects and facilities,” **said Narric Rome, Vice President of Government Affairs, Americans for the Arts.** “We are glad the STAR Act provisions were included in the 2020 INVEST in America Act and hope it will again be included in future Transportation and Infrastructure bills. We applaud the leadership of Congresswoman Adams in bringing this bill forward again in the 117th Congress.”

“Art vastly enhances the experience of riding transit and even plays a role in public health and community healing. That's why we're excited to support the STAR Act,” **said Ben Stone, Director of Arts & Culture at Transportation for America.** “We saw the value of art firsthand in our Arts and Transportation Rapid Response, our initiative to partner transit agencies with artists to address pandemic-related challenges. In projects across the country, we've seen artists make transit feel welcoming in distressing times, creatively promote masking and social distancing, and support transit ridership. The STAR Act will make more of these types of projects possible.”

“Art is important to America’s transit systems because it helps to incorporate transit into the community; it becomes a part of the fabric and builds community pride,” **said John Lewis, Chief Executive Officer of the Charlotte Area Transit System.** “It also enhances the riding experience while commuters connect to all of the places public transit takes them.”

Congresswoman Alma S. Adams, Ph.D. is serving her fourth full term in Congress. She represents the 12th District of North Carolina, which includes parts of Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, Cornelius, Davidson, Huntersville, Matthews, Mint Hill, and Pineville. She is the only art professor in the United States Congress, having taught for 40 years.

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