

# 'Nobody's Going to Help You Here': St. Louis Assault Highlights the Danger of Gun-Free Zones

By [Cam Edwards](#) | December 15, 2023 [Story source: Bearing Arms](#)

Though Missouri is generally pretty good when it comes to the Second Amendment, there's still room for improvement. The Missouri House of Representatives, for example, approved HB 282 earlier this year, which would have repealed the prohibition on lawful concealed carry on public transportation, but the bill failed to receive a vote on the Senate floor before the session gaveled to a close; keeping the "gun-free zones" in place for at least another year.

The problem is that these supposedly sensitive places don't come with extra security to ensure the safety of riders, and [crimes involving firearms](#) still take place despite the "no guns allowed" policies in St. Louis and Kansas City. The most recent incident happened earlier this week, when a man [assaulted a passenger](#) on a city bus.

According to the FBI, the unknown suspect violently attacked and pointed a gun at a transgender victim at about 3:30 p.m. on April 13 aboard a MetroBus at Chippewa Street and Grand Boulevard in St. Louis' Dutchtown neighborhood.

Surveillance video showed the suspect taking a seat near the back of the bus and begin talking to the victim who was already aboard, according to the FBI. Minutes later, the suspect got up from his seat and began kicking and punching the victim nearly two dozen times. He also pointed a gun at the victim.

The victim, Sydney Masie, spoke to the Riverfront Times about the assault, and the paper also reached out to Kevin Scott, general manager of security for Bistate Development, which runs the city's MetroTransit system, who basically admitted that the "gun-free zone" operates on the honor system.

When asked if there were any security measures in place that could have prevented Maisie's assault, particularly in regard to the

assailant's gun, Scott says it's not possible to "scan" riders at all 59 bus routes in MetroTransit's three-jurisdiction scope.

But the agency does have employ public safety personnel who patrol bus routes and transit centers and respond to calls for help. Security guards and police officers, including some from SLMPD, according to Scott, ride the buses.

"We can't have a police officer on every bus, but we try to create a dynamic where police officers in overtime and off-duty capacity ride some of our buses for visibility and comfort," Scott says.

There wasn't a security guard or police officer on Maisie's bus, and it bus kept traveling its route while Maisie was attacked.

Even through the chaos of it all, Maisie says she remembers questioning why it seemed as if no one else on the packed bus reacted. "Why were there no turning heads?" She remembers kicking back and screaming "Somebody help me!"

"Nobody's going to help you here!" Maisie says the man said as he pulled out his gun.

Maisie is a staunch supporter of public transit, and still uses it exclusively. Even so, she wonders if things would have been different if St. Louis' system was safer or more efficient.

"It shows how big of a failure public transit is in St. Louis," Maisie says. "It's not safe. Like nobody should have a gun on the bus. But he did."

I don't know if this shows how big of a failure St. Louis's public transportation is, but it *definitely* shows how ineffective labeling a place a "gun-free zone" is when it comes to keeping guns away. MetroTransit prohibits anyone from carrying a gun on their property, but has no way of ensuring that the policy is being followed. The result is a system that disarms the law-abiding, while empowering violent offenders to carry out their attacks in a target-rich environment.

If nobody should have a gun on a bus, but Maisie's attacker did, then why shouldn't Maisie be able to carry a firearm for self-defense? Why

shouldn't *any* lawful gun owner be able to do the same? The city can't protect riders, so why are they not able to protect themselves? The carry ban on public transportation not only prevents lawful gun owners from bringing their firearms on buses and light rail, but disarms patrons who rely on public transportation as they go about their daily routine. Even if MetroTransit officials contend these attacks within the system are rare, violent crime in St. Louis is unfortunately all too common. Yet those residents dependent on using the transit network have to make a choice; violate the law and bring their firearm with them, or follow the law and be disarmed and defenseless throughout the day.

I sincerely hope that legislation mirroring HB 282 will be introduced in the Missouri legislature again next year, and that state senators will have the intestinal fortitude to approve the bill alongside their House counterparts. Public transit in the state is "gun-free" in name only, and it's high time to ensure that patrons don't have to give up their right to armed self-defense in exchange for a ride.