

Volunteer Transit Security Group Asks For Free Fares

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PORTLAND, Ore. -- The Guardian Angels say they want to bring down crime on TriMet but while doing that, they want to ride for free.

The volunteer activists claim when they ride the MAX or buses, they can help keep TriMet rides safer.

But TriMet isn't so sure.

Five teens were charged with robbing and assaulting a young woman Wednesday on a MAX light rail train.

Almost everyone FOX 12 interviewed Friday said TriMet crime needs to be stopped, but they have different opinions on whether the Guardian Angels should have to buy tickets.

They're hard to miss, in their trademark red berets, and the Portland Guardian Angels said that's the point.

They want people to see them, saying when Angels ride on buses and trains, they can help stop crime in its tracks.

But the group of about 13 is asking TriMet to let them ride for free, and they are getting a mixed reaction.

Rachel Rolph said you can't put a price on safety.

"Most definitely, they're trying to keep everybody else safe, so there's no reason to pay for that," Rolph said.

But other people we talked to weren't so sure.

"I think if Tri-Met is charging everybody else to get on, they should pay too. It's a win-win for everybody," Reggie Jackson said.

Marc Wolters helped revive the Guardian Angels. He said he's seen too many problems on the transit system recently.

"There's muggings, there's people being verbally abused, being very intimidated. It should concern everybody. We need to look out, ya know, for our own," Wolters said.

But TriMet isn't so sure. The agency said the Angels haven't had the proper training.

"I think we've almost answered every question they've thrown at us and I think it's just a question about liability," Wolters said.

TriMet officials said that's exactly right.

The Guardian Angels said they will continue to ride TriMet even if they do have to pay out of their own pockets.

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