

**Newspaper: The New Paper**  
**Date: 15 February 2006**  
**Title: Why not show some sympathy?**

Just before 5pm on the eve of Chinese New Year I boarded bus No 293 at Tampines interchange with my 6-year-old son.

I was carrying a number of plastic bags full of drinks and other things. After I scanned my card, I realised that my son had not done the same. I asked him why and he said he had lost the card. So I looked for coins to pay the fare but could not find any. I found I had only \$10 and \$50 notes with me. I then approached the bus captain and asked him what I could do. I was told that I could try to get change from other passengers. If not, he said loudly, my son would have to get off the bus. I had no choice other than to alight with my son, with all the plastic bags.

I can understand that the bus captain has the right to ask any passenger who does not pay the bus fare to alight, but my son is just 6 and I was carrying so many bags.

And he wasn't polite. Did he need to raise his voice in front of so many passengers, especially on New Year's Eve?

It has been said that bus fare increases will lead to better service, but I didn't see any sign of this.

Louis Choo

### **Reply from SBS Transit**

I refer to the letter "Why not show some sympathy" by Mr Louis Choo dated 15 February 2006.

We conducted an investigation immediately after Mr Choo's letter ran in your paper. We understand that our Bus Captain has asked Mr Choo to try asking other passengers if they had any small change. Mr Choo purportedly told our Bus Captain that he could not get any change. Our Bus Captain had no choice but to cancel Mr Choo's trip and requested that Mr Choo and his son to alight from the bus. Our Bus Captain kept his composure and did not raise his voice.

We understand Mr Choo's distress but we also seek his understanding in the matter. Our Bus Captains have to make sure that all commuters are treated equally. They will have to alight from the bus if they fail to pay the bus fare. We cannot allow some to carry on their travel without paying the full fare when others have. It would not be fair on the full-paying customers. We would also like to take this chance to advise commuters to get their ez-link card or exact fare ready before boarding the bus.

Yours sincerely,  
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CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS  
SBS TRANSIT LTD