

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE AMALGAMATED TRANSIT UNION|AFL-CIO/CLC

INTRANSIT

JULY - AUGUST - SEPTEMBER 2021

From Canada to the U.S. ATU LOCALS ORGANIZING TO WIN!



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The Voice of Transit Workers

ATU-COPE is the Amalgamated Transit Union's Committee on Political Education, the key political action committee (PAC) in the United States that has improved the lives of workers in the transit, school bus, and over-the-road bus industries for more than 30 years.

Like it or not, politics matters, and in many cases, we get to elect our own bosses. They make important decisions on key issues like: Funding, Service Levels, Privatization, and Safety.

ATU-COPE relies solely on the voluntary contributions of ATU members in the U.S. If we all gave just a few dollars per month, the PAC could support more pro-labor and pro-transit candidates and help keep them in positions of power.

ATU-COPE backs Democrats and Republicans. We support candidates who look out for transit, school bus, and over-the-road workers, regardless of political party.

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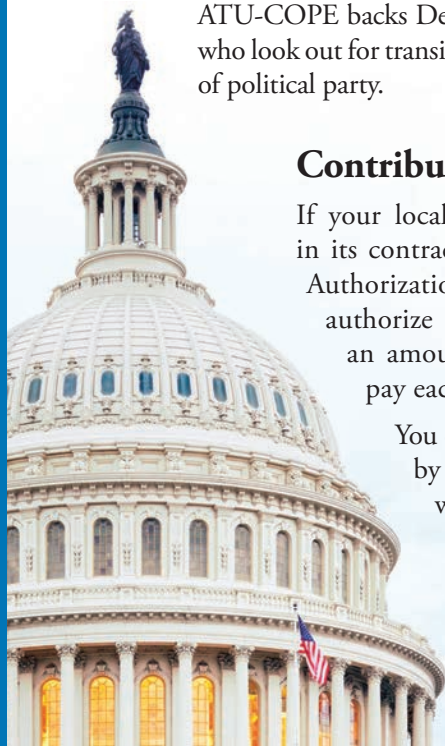
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Subscription: USA and Canada, \$5 a year. Single copy: 50 cents. All others: \$10 a year. Published bimonthly by the Amalgamated Transit Union, Editor: David Roscow, Designer: Paul A. Fitzgerald. Editorial Office: 10000 New Hampshire Avenue, Silver Spring, MD 20903. Tel: 1-301-431-7100. Please send all requests for address changes to the ATU Registry Dept. ISSN: 0019-3291. PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT NO. 40033361. RETURN UNDELIVERABLE CANADIAN ADDRESSES TO: APC Postal Logistics, LLC, PO Box 503, RPO, West Beaver Creek, Richmond Hill ON L4B 4R6.



LOCAL 1756-ARCADIA, CA, CHARTED A NEW COURSE AND WON BIG

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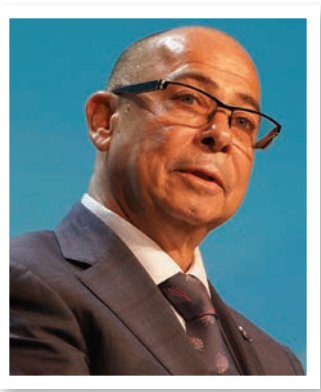
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JOHN A. COSTA, INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT

Stop calling us heroes

When the pandemic began in March 2020, most people were told to stay home from work to stop the spread of the deadly virus. But our members continued to bravely report to work to provide critical transportation for nurses, grocery store, and other essential workers on the frontlines of this crisis.

After a moving Facebook video from our Local **26**-Detroit, MI, brother Jason Hargrove, who died from COVID-19, went viral, the media, transit agencies and politicians finally began to rightfully acknowledge us and all transit workers as heroes.

Now, I'm sick of people calling us heroes when we have to fight tooth and nail against companies and transit agencies trying to take away all they can at the bargaining table after our members sacrificed so much throughout the pandemic, some with their lives.

I'm sick of people calling us heroes when we're still fighting to protect our members from both COVID-19 and daily assaults.

I'm sick of people calling us heroes when we still have a school bus worker shortage because companies refuse to pay a competitive wage.

I'm sick of people calling us heroes and then doing nothing to address the mental health crisis in our workplaces.

Pay and protect transit workers

The ATU has not and will not back down when fighting for what our members need and deserve. At the national level in the U.S., the ATU has been aggressively advocating for funding and protection for transit and our members through President Biden's Build Back Better agenda. Because of ATU's tireless advocacy, we won historic



funding for transit with the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and we are looking forward to an additional \$10 billion through reconciliation. We hope to have similar success in Canada, where the ATU has been fighting nonstop for funding to keep transit going.

Because of the infrastructure bill in the U.S., transit workers will also be better protected from assaults. The bill includes language from the Transit Worker and Pedestrian Protection Act, a long-time priority of the ATU. Not a week goes by that we don't hear about a transit worker being punched, spit on, verbally abused, or worse by passengers, yet transit agencies do nothing. Attacks on transit workers have been ignored for too long.

Standing in solidarity with TWU and all workers

Solidarity is the foundation of the labor movement. That's why I was honored to join our allies, the Transport Workers Union (TWU), for their 26th Constitutional Convention in Las Vegas, NV, this year. The ATU and the TWU have been partners throughout the pandemic to ensure our members are protected on the job, including winning federal COVID relief funding to keep our



members employed and transit systems running.

As I spoke to their delegates, I was reminded of the hundreds of members from our two unions who lost their lives due to the pandemic and the fact that transit agencies still have the nerve to deny essential workers hazard pay for their sacrifices. They still have the nerve not to install driver safety shields even though drivers continue to be assaulted on the job. It's shameful. As I ended my speech, I had a couple of choice words for transit agencies that refuse to protect their workers. F@€% YOU!

We will continue to stand up to transit agencies in solidarity with the TWU and build deeper alliances with our fellow trade unions, including the thousands of workers who are on strike or threatening to strike across North America.

Canadian Indigenous Communities

The ATU not only stands with workers. We stand with all marginalized communities. That's why the ATU continues to speak out about the atrocities that took place against children for over a century at residential schools in Canada. This year on Canada Day and the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, we joined



Indigenous communities to call for a day of reflection instead of celebration after hundreds more children's remains were found in unmarked graves at a residential school in Saskatchewan. I'm proud that the ATU has chosen to stand with Indigenous communities in their fight for justice.

The ATU continues to lead the way through organizing

With everything going on, it's easy to lose focus or get overwhelmed by the amount of injustice there is in the world but know that your Union will always be here fighting for what's right. I'm proud of the Locals that put in the hard work to expand the ATU's impact, whether it's welcoming new members, securing good contracts, or winning electoral campaigns. Organizing continues to be at the heart of what we do in the face of extreme challenges.

In Canada, we had significant victories in municipal elections in Alberta after ATU members put in extraordinary work to change the political landscape in the province by electing candidates who share our values. Our members had been organizing long before the endorsements were made, building solidarity and participation, which was critical to these victories, including the election of one of our own, Amarjeet Sohi, former Local 569 bus operator now Mayor-elect of Edmonton.

In California, Local 1756-Arcadia, CA, launched a successful 'Times Up Transdev' campaign that took the Local from being trusted to ratifying a contract that makes our members the highest-paid bus operators in their region. They did this by committing to organizing, giving workers a voice at the bargaining table, and continuous and strategic mobilizing to get members involved.

These campaigns give us all hope and remind us of our strength when we come together to fight as one. Together we can elect representatives that not only understand us but are us. Together we can organize our workplaces to secure better contracts for workers and their families. And together, we can ensure that transit workers aren't just called heroes by politicians and transit agencies but get treated like the heroes they truly are. It's my honor to continue this fight alongside you. ❖



JAVIER M. PEREZ, JR., INTERNATIONAL EXEC. VICE PRESIDENT

Back to the Basics

Let's say out loud what we all know. The pandemic forced us to curtail our one-on-one training of Local Officers and members. Still, under the leadership of our Executive Officers, General Executive Board (GEB), and staff, we learned to Zoom and utilized this tool to provide even more training than what would have normally been scheduled.

But wait, there's more. In addition to more virtual training programs, Zoom provided access to many members who may never have the opportunity to attend an in-person class. Still, there is no substitute for one-on-one in-person training.

At our Fall GEB meeting, we learned about the refresher and new training that will be rolled out as we move forward. I'm excited about these training programs, so please stay tuned.

Imagine the early history of your Local and how your predecessors met similar challenges as we have faced during the pandemic. Local leaders had to share ideas, concepts, seek help, and then, by trial and error, build the contracts and programs each Local now enjoys.

I've paraphrased one of my favorite proverbs before, saying, "Our Union grows great when its men and women plant trees in whose shade they shall never sit."

As the preamble to our Constitution states, "We assembled in order build up an organization where all working members of our craft can participate in the discussion of those practical problems upon the solution of which depends on our welfare and prosperity."

Your Local may have once had a Health and Wellness Committee that has become dormant, or you as Leaders are considering forming one to address issues currently facing our members. In either case, the times prove that this must be done.

More and more, we are seeing an assault on our ability to sustain medical benefits as employers try to lessen their costs by decreasing the benefits and or increasing co-pays and deductibles.

Does your Local committee have a copy of the actual contract for health insurance? Yes, I know that at open enrollment, everyone receives a Summary Plan Description (SPD), but anyone who has read it knows it's a brief overview and states clearly (usually in small lettering) that if there is any difference between the SPD and the actual contract for insurance the contract prevails. Local Unions need to obtain a copy of that contract and understand what it says. If there are changes being made, we need to be part of that decision process, and our members need to know.

For example, one member is seeing a heart specialist in anticipation of surgery or aftercare. Do you think this member wants to wake up to find out this doctor is no longer in the network or does not participate in the plan?

How many of your members and friends have been affected by COVID?

Terrible as it is, reports state that one in eight of us has a family member who has died, is being treated for, and or survived cancer (I survived).

What kind of coverage and access to new emerging treatment does your health care plan provide?

And remember, we too are responsible for "Planting Shade Trees for future members to enjoy." ❖



KENNETH RAY KIRK,
INTERNATIONAL SECRETARY-TREASURER

Solidarity is alive and well in the labor movement

October 2021 was an inspiring month for organized labor as Unions and workers fought back against corporate greed with the unity and solidarity that our movement was built on. As working people and our members kept our countries moving during the pandemic, corporations raked in record profits but demanded concessions from their employees. Workers decided enough is enough and are standing up to corporations by fighting back by walking off the job. From Kellogg's to hospital workers in New York to nurses in Massachusetts and John Deere employees, thousands of workers conducted strikes in the month of October, which was called Striketober.

The anatomy of a campaign

Although strikes are great, and I fully support them, I also like putting together comprehensive campaigns during bargaining. Campaigns are a thing of beauty when they're done the right way. I have been actively involved in a campaign with Local **1031**-Beaumont, TX, against its employer Transit Management of Beaumont (First Transit, Inc).

Putting on a campaign involves getting your members engaged, gathering information about the employer and stakeholders, determining who your allies are, and fighting back against the oppression by the employer. The members of Local 1031 have stepped up in their campaign to get the fair and just contract they deserve. They have conducted small actions on the job, generated media coverage on local tv stations, attended and testified at public meetings, held spirited rallies with the public, and conducted practice pickets as a warning shot to their employer. Although, as of the writing of this column, we have not reached a settlement, a financial offer has been made after management put zeroes on the table. Our fight will continue.

This campaign in Beaumont is just one of the many being conducted by our Locals in Edmonton, AB, Arcadia, CA, Calgary, AB, and countless other cities that make me proud to be a member of the ATU.

What also makes me proud of our Union is that even as our Locals and members wage campaigns to fight for better wages, hazard pay, improved safety, and protections, elect pro-transit candidates, and more, our Locals and our members find time to support worthy causes.

Case in point was the ATU MS Golf Tournament held this past September in Davidsonville, MD. Around two hundred members and friends of the ATU participated in this successful event. We raised a significant amount of funds to help find a cure for this debilitating disease. I want to extend a special thanks to all who contributed to the success of this event.

Elections have consequences

In closing, I have an important reminder for all our members. I had the opportunity to attend U.S. Secretary of Labor Marty Walsh's visit in Atlanta, GA, to our Local 732 union hall for a townhall meeting on the importance of voters' rights and civic engagement. One thing Secretary Walsh told our members and allies in attendance stuck with me. He said, "Elections have consequences." Secretary Walsh is right. That's why I encourage every member to get involved in elections. For our U.S. members, I also encourage you to contribute to our ATU COPE program, which you can do on the ATU website because the critical 2022 U.S. mid-term elections are right around the corner. ❖

Local 1756-Arcadia, CA, Charted a New Course and Won Big

On March 16, 2020, as the coronavirus pandemic began to sweep the globe, members of then-trusted Local 1756-Arcadia, CA, entered into negotiations with French-based multinational corporation Transdev. The more than 450 members of the unit demanded wage increases, an end to mandatory (or forced) overtime, improved health care, and more. In total, members' demands amounted to an overhaul of their entire contract.

Like all bosses do when disaster strikes, Transdev saw the pandemic as an opportunity to go in for the kill. A two-year trusteeship to restore the Local's finances revealed that member morale and participation in union activities were at a low point. Former leadership had kept members in the dark during contentious negotiations. Contracts had suffered massive givebacks on sick days, holidays, and healthcare cost-sharing, and members had reached a breaking point.

Local pledged not to repeat the sins of the past

The trustees and activist members were not going to repeat the sins of the past. Two decisions would revolutionize the

way the Local functioned and fought: opening bargaining to the members and committing to the organizing model.

Drawing lessons from Joint Industry Council (JIC) campaigns and strikes against Transdev in Virginia, the Local began preparing for bargaining six months before meeting with the company. One of those lessons was implementing "open bargaining" – that is, negotiation sessions that are open to members to attend. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, open bargaining in Arcadia took place over Zoom. Members sat down in front of their computers at their homes, sometimes with their children, and gave the Local a visual power that Transdev could not deny.

Open bargaining energized members, hit Transdev

The pressure of open bargaining weighed on the Transdev bargaining team, who had to grapple with something they had never experienced before: an audience of transit workers and community organizations scrutinizing their every move. Open bargaining not only energized members at the bargaining table, but it also hit Transdev where it is most vulnerable, public relations.



Times have changed, and it's no longer popular for a company to deny workers wage parity with other workers or to reject their demands for better working conditions or accountability for abusive management. In September 2020, as Local 1756 battled on, a Gallup Poll found 65% of Americans approve of labor unions, the highest in two decades.

Those glimpses at bargaining were an eye-opener for many members. In one session, management blatantly said that they had the funds to meet the union's economic demands but were choosing not to. It's one thing to hear about management's disrespectful proposals second-hand; it's infuriating to see it for yourself. "This was a turning point for our campaign," said Local 1756 Financial-Secretary Lupe Carranza. "It helped members see that we're all in this fight together."

TIMES UP TRANSDEV

Open bargaining also helped members learn an important lesson: campaigns are usually won away from the negotiating table. Union bargaining committees need members mobilized at work and in the public sphere to gain the upper hand at the table. That's why before one session, members placed signs in their car windows – "TIMES UP TRANSDEV" – in the garage parking lot and took to the break area chanting the same message.

In December 2020, the Local elected new officers and was released from trusteeship. New officers of the Local worked with the International to devise a plan to escalate the campaign. To win against Transdev, they committed to doing what effective Local Unions have always done to win: educating and activating the membership.

Leaders embraced the "organizing model" of trade unionism, which emphasizes recruiting members to action through strategic, one-on-one, worker-to-worker conversations. That process begins with listening to members first, identifying issues they're willing to fight for, and delegating responsibility to a Contract Action Team made up of members willing to volunteer their time and be trained. Those member-organizers, in turn, talk to their coworkers, showing them how the union can be the solution to their issues and recruiting them to join actions to pressure the company to meet union demands.

"Profit has been prioritized over our quality of life," said Local 1756 President/Business Agent Lorence Bradford.



"There is only one way to push against a system that exploits our need for better working conditions: we must get organized. Together we can take collective action and begin to force employers to respect transit workers."

By engaging every member with one-on-one, worker-to-worker conversations throughout the bargaining process, the Local turned the membership's anger at management into organized action. After being told that management had no intention of improving their insulting wage proposal, members organized to shut down the Transdev Regional Vice President's email. They mobilized over three hundred members, flooding his email with concerns over management's direction in bargaining. The following week, members shut down his phone, too. They mobilized over two hundred members and allies to leave voicemails demanding better wages for transit workers.

"I've never seen our members more engaged in fighting management," said Bradford. "This contract campaign was their campaign, and they were going to make their voices heard."

Reforming your Local's practices can be challenging, even under the best conditions. Bargaining and campaigning amid a pandemic makes that even harder. Yet Local 1756 did just that, and it worked. By starting early, opening bargaining, committing to the organizing model, and repeatedly and strategically mobilizing a majority of members, they were able to ratify a contract that makes them the highest-paid bus operators in their region. Even once wages were tentatively agreed to, they kept up the fight, winning an historic phase-out of mandatory overtime. ❖



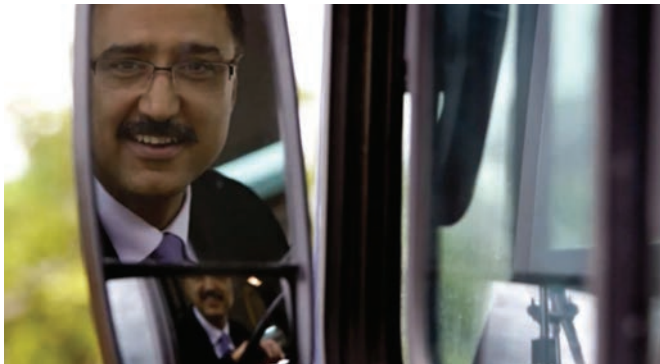
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Alberta Locals Mobilize to Delivery Critical Municipal Election Victories

Alberta ATU locals are fighting on all fronts. They delivered with major wins for pro-transit, pro-worker candidates in municipal elections for new councilors, mayors, and school board trustees.

Former Local 569 bus operator elected Mayor of Edmonton

In Edmonton, Local 569-Edmonton, AB, went all in for former member Amarjeet Sohi, who ran successfully for Mayor of Edmonton through a long and grueling campaign. Sohi won with a resounding majority of the vote in a field of several other candidates vying for the top spot.



Local 569 members worked hard alongside other organizers on the Sohi campaign and proved to be a significant political force during these past municipal elections in the City of Edmonton.

Sohi was a paratransit operator who organized his coworkers to join the ATU and had then served on the executive of Local 569. As a former ATU operator and member of the executive board we know that we now have a Mayor that understands the needs of public transit and public services.

Local 583 in Calgary teamed with their labour council to elect a pro-transit slate. The slate called Calgary's Future, is a coalition of labour unions, labour activists, and advocates from other progressive organizations in the City of Calgary. The coalition successfully elected several

endorsed candidates for local councilors. The ATU-endorsed Jyonti Gondek was elected as Calgary's first-ever female mayor.

A second front in Alberta is organizing the unorganized.

Local 569 and Local 987-Lethbridge, AB, have taken on Canada's largest private contractor, Pacific Western Transportation. Local 569 has an application to represent 110 drivers at Canada's largest On Demand transit service.

The third front in the fight is against a mandatory ratification vote imposed by the Alberta Labour Relations Board. The ALRB has ordered the members to vote on the latest employer offer, which includes 0 and 1% in wages and a reduction in sign-up period and tool allowances for maintenance.

Local 569 is showing real union unity by mounting a strong 'reject' campaign that will force management back to the bargaining table.

These fights across the province are a testing ground for a bigger fight against the United Conservative Party in the 2023 provincial elections. ❖



ATU Canada Mobilizes for Snap Federal Election to Push Vote Transit 2021 Platform

When Prime Minister Justin Trudeau decided to hold a snap election on September 20, 2021 in a bid to get a majority government in the House of Commons, ATU Canada immediately sprung to action by spearheading the Keep Transit Moving Coalition to push a transit platform.

The Vote Transit 2021 Platform focused on five key issues, including the need for federal operational transit dollars, the creation of a public, intercity highway bus service, and improving accessibility of transit infrastructure.

The coalition met with candidates vying to become Members of Parliament from across the country from all parties in targeted ridings to talk about its platform. Several dozen signed on, publicizing the platform and making transit an issue in the 2021 election.

The coalition also hosted a widely-seen virtual transit townhall that included as panelists: NDP candidate and documentary filmmaker Avi Lewis, former leader of the Green Party Elizabeth May, and the Liberal Minister of Environment in the last Parliament Jonathan Wilkinson. The townhall was viewed by thousands of potential voters

who had transit as a top-of-mind issue.

The results of the election were seen by many to be not much of a change from what the composition of the House looked like before. In turn many ended up criticizing Prime Minister Trudeau for holding an election during the COVID-19 pandemic, including most major party leaders.

Trudeau's Liberal Party did maintain their minority government with a Conservative opposition. The New Democratic Party gained a seat, and other third parties remained at the same seat count.

In addition to the Keep Transit Moving Coalition, some ATU locals were involved on the ground through different campaigns or internally and even ended up helping elect a first-term NDP MP in the riding of Edmonton-Griesbach, Blake Desjarlais, who upset a long-time incumbent.

In all, the ATU and its allies had a strong presence during the election and is looking forward to working with newly elected representatives to push for issues affecting transit workers, riders, and working families in the next parliament. ❖

Halifax Local pushes for promised bus operator shields

Local **508** in Halifax, Nova Scotia is fighting back after news from their employer, Halifax Transit that they will not be implementing driver shields as promised in the lead up to a 2019-2020 bus purchase tender. Driver protection systems (DPS) is heavily supported by their membership according to a 2019 survey the Local conducted that saw 90% of operators supporting the move.

The Local also worked with Halifax Transit at the beginning of the pandemic when the employer agreed to the union's suggestions of backdoor boarding, mask mandates for passengers, and suspending fares to help stop the spread of the virus. However, in the past couple of months, the Local has seen less protections than when the pandemic began.

Hearing from maintenance members that new buses arriving did not have manufactured shields as promised, Local President Ken Wilson went to management to demand more safety for his members and to get answers as to why the shields were removed from purchase agreements. Management noted that reasons had to do mostly with costing.

As President Wilson noted, safety of both drivers and riders should not have a price. On the heels of a pandemic and increased driver assaults, there is no reason that drivers should have less protection.

Local 508 pledged to continue fighting to ensure the utmost safety for their members and to ensure drivers get the protections they need! ❖

With America facing a School Bus worker shortage, the ATU calls for better wages and benefits

When the pandemic hit, most school districts went virtual for almost a year, leaving thousands of school bus workers furloughed while many others became sick or quit due to the pandemic. As schools and students returned to in-person learning in the fall, school districts needed school bus drivers and workers to come back to work. Combined with a competitive labor market for Commercial License Drivers (CDL) workers luring drivers away to more lucrative careers, the school bus driver shortage became a full-blown crisis.

Even though school bus driver shortages have been an issue for years, the pandemic made it worse. “COVID came, and it was the perfect storm,” International President John Costa told the *New York Times*. “It’s a big problem. Some had to find other jobs, and some retired. Now, 18, 19 months later, schools are coming back, and the drivers are not there.”

Representing more than 12,000 school bus workers, Local 1181-New York, NY, President Michael Cordiello said that 244 drivers had retired this year alone. “We actually have more people retiring than have been hired,” said Cordiello. “COVID has just blown it out of the water.”

America’s 13,000 school districts spend approximately \$22 billion annually, about half a million buses, to get students to school and back. Now districts are trying to get drivers to return by offering signing bonuses. In Pittsburgh, where they have a 400 driver shortage, the signing bonus is now \$3,500. “Nobody is applying,” said Local 1743-Pittsburgh, PA, President Diane Stambaugh. “And because of COVID, they could not have classes, and a lot of people retired, and a lot of people just flat out quit.”

Private school bus contractors look for cheapest labor

In order for the school bus shortage to get under control, the ATU is pushing the industry to do more to attract drivers beyond signing bonuses. Bus drivers need to start getting paid more and better benefits to continue working. Private school bus contractors are to blame for focusing on the bottom line rather than investing in boosting worker pay and benefits to help deal with this growing shortage of school bus workers.

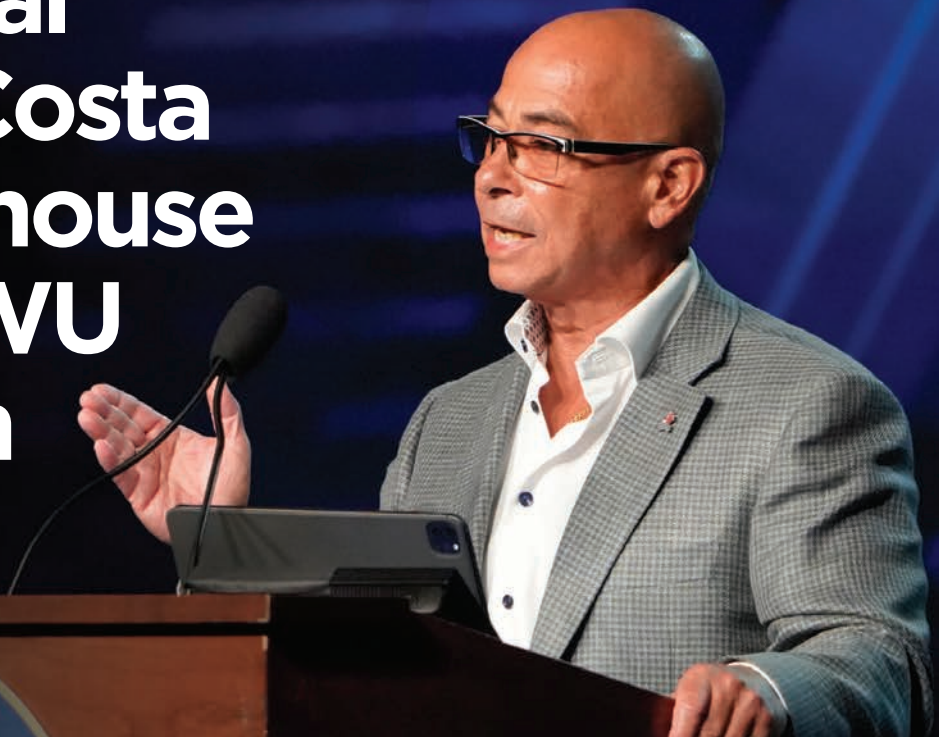
“These private school bus contractors are looking for the cheapest labor possible and refusing to offer competitive pay and benefits,” Costa continued. “This is not a part-time job. The hours are tough, and the job of transporting kids to and from school and other school activities is more than just driving a bus. Until these school bus companies offer the pay, health care, and other incentives that will attract quality CDL drivers, we will continue to see these shortages in this industry.”

In addition, the school bus and motor coach industries, which were devastated by the pandemic, have only received \$2 billion in U.S. federal COVID relief under the Coronavirus Economic Relief for Transportation Services (CERTS) Program. The ATU has been pushing for additional federal funding.

The school bus shortage isn’t going away. With millions of students needing to get to school, school bus workers are a crucial part of getting them there and back. One thing we do know: more must be done to compensate workers for the integral role they play in our children’s lives and our communities. ❖



International President Costa brings the house down at TWU Convention



Pledging solidarity and power as fellow transit workers, ATU International President John Costa delivered a passionate speech that brought the house down at the Transport Workers Union's (TWU) 26th Constitutional Convention in Las Vegas, NV.

Costa, who walked up to the sound of New Jersey-born Bruce Springsteen, was introduced by TWU International President John Samuelson, calling Costa a longtime friend and colleague who he has worked with to fight on behalf of transit workers and the entire labor movement.

"For John to get elected President of the International ATU while I'm President of the TWU can only be a massive benefit for organized labor in the transportation industry," said Samuelson.

Expressing what an honor it was to be there, Costa told the TWU delegates and guests about working his way from the New Jersey light rail division right out of high school at the age of 18 to becoming International President of the ATU. "I believe if you're going to run a union, you can't run it from the office. You have to be out there with the members," Costa said to a round of applause.

We 'Held the Line' and Won

Costa went on to talk about the many victories the two unions have achieved by standing together. "When the pandemic first hit, we vowed to take aggressive action if our members were not protected on the job. We 'Held the Line' and Won protections to keep our members safe," Costa told the packed room.

"When our members were laid off, and service was being shut down because our transit systems cried poor. We 'Held the Line' and Won federal COVID relief funding to keep our members employed, our transit systems and airlines running, and hazard pay for our members," he continued. "We had an important election last November that was critical to our future. We 'Held the Line' and Won by electing the most pro-worker President since Franklin D. Roosevelt in the White House and a pro-worker majority in the Senate."

In closing, Costa brought the crowd to their feet after passionately proclaiming that he's tired of companies calling workers "heroes" at the bargaining table, then turning around and making cuts. "We saved this economy, and you wanna make cuts? F@€% YOU," he said to a roaring standing ovation. ❖

The ATU joins with the TWU to demand Congress provide transit workers hazard pay



The ATU teamed with the Transport Workers Union (TWU) in calling on Congress to include hazard pay for hero frontline transit workers in the reconciliation bill currently pending in Congress as of press time for In Transit.

In a letter written to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, ATU International President John Costa and TWU International President John Samuelsen stressed the critical role transit workers played during the pandemic.

Members have put their lives on the line

“While most Americans hunkered down at home during the height of the pandemic, our members reported to work every day, putting their lives on the line so that essential workers could get to hospitals and pharmacies in order to keep the rest of us alive,” the letter read.

The letter went on to thank Speaker Pelosi and Majority Leader Schumer for their leadership in the House and Senate to secure nearly \$70 billion in COVID relief funds to keep transit systems going but pointed to the sacrifices transit workers have made, some with their own lives, in calling for hazard pay.

From Heroes to Zeroes

“During the crisis, we were praised as heroes. Now, however, it seems that America is ready to move on,” read the letter. “At the bargaining table, it seems we have transformed from heroes to zeroes. While we appreciate the ticker-tape parades for frontline workers, our members deserve nothing less than the COVID-19 ‘Heroes Fund’ proposal which House and Senate Democrats put forth to reward, retain, and recruit essential workers.”

While many transit agencies agree that transit workers deserve hazard pay, they believe the federal government needs to provide the resources to make hazard pay a reality. ❖

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Want to stay connected, informed and involved with all things ATU? Then download the ATU App to your smartphone today to get the latest news about ATU, public transit, politics, events, actions, photos of members and videos, and other important content. The ATU Mobile App will regularly deliver news you can use and need to know to your mobile devices.

The ATU App is free and simple to download to iPhones and Android devices. Visit <http://www.atu.org/action/atu-mobile-app> to get started today with the ATU App.



U.S. Labor Secretary visits Local 732-Atlanta, GA for town hall on protecting voters' rights

At the ATU Local 732 union hall in Atlanta, GA, U.S. Labor Secretary Marty Walsh joined ATU International President John Costa, International Secretary-Treasurer Ken Kirk, Local 732 President Britt Dunams, Local 732 members, the Georgia Labor Movement, and activists for a spirited town hall on the importance of voters' rights, civic engagement, and democratic rights.

The event began with Costa leading the crowd as the ATU anthem "Don't Play With My Money" from the successful Cinder Bed Road Local 689-Washington, DC, strike played on the loudspeakers. Costa then introduced Sec. Walsh as a union card-carrying friend of the ATU and talked about the fight against voter suppression, voter protection legislation pending in Congress, and the efforts of Locals 732 and 1324-Savannah, GA, to mobilize our members in the Georgia Senate runoff election victory last January.

Sec. Walsh told the crowd, "Elections have consequences," and the impact they have on working families, public transit, and labor unions. He praised ATU members for their bravery on the frontlines of the pandemic and

thanked the ATU in Georgia for helping to secure a majority in the Senate with the runoff election wins last January.

Sec. Walsh also took questions from attendees on voting rights, the PRO Act, protecting transit workers on the job, and other issues. When asked the question "what can we do?" Sec. Walsh responded, "vote, vote, and call your elected officials." ❖



Building Skills, Saving Jobs

If you are a regular reader of the *Legislative Column*, you know that we usually focus on issues that impact transit bus operators: The vicious assaults. The lack of restroom access. Blind spots.

In this edition, however, we are going to put the spotlight on our maintenance members. Our legislative program in recent years has been centered on ensuring that your jobs are secure during these changing times. Since taking over leadership in 2019, International President Costa, who started his transit career in the maintenance department at New Jersey Transit on the rail side, has dedicated a significant amount of time working to support legislation in support of bus mechanics, rail car technicians, signals technicians and traction power electricians, facilities maintainers, and others.

Why such attention on maintenance? **A recent poll found that a whopping 83% of local transit union leaders do not feel that their maintenance members are adequately trained to work on zero emission buses.** Preventive maintenance on a transit bus or rail car nowadays is quite different than it was just a few years ago, when a skilled mechanic could likely have made do with the contents of their tool box. Advances in computer technology have fundamentally changed the nature of the job. Yet, training has not kept pace, and huge skill gaps have developed.

Moreover, these vehicles are going to be coming at us like a speeding train in the next decade. Many states seeking to address climate change are passing legislation either mandating or encouraging a full conversion to electric buses within the next few years. While this is a laudable goal, it will require a massive amount of training for thousands of transit workers who will be responsible for providing preventive maintenance and repair on these cutting-edge vehicles. Performing this work safely must be an industry priority. Not one transit worker should be electrocuted because they were working on an electric vehicle without proper training. And no one should have their jobs contracted out because of the lack of workforce development programs.



The ATU is therefore pushing for language in these state bills calling for a high percentage of bus funding to be used for workforce development, including registered apprenticeships and other training programs to address the impact of the transition to zero emission buses on the workforce.

The ATU has also worked the legislative process on the federal level to create historic change in the area of transit maintenance. We have succeeded in steering millions of dollars in the Fiscal Year 2020 and 2021 Transportation Appropriations bills to a non-profit group with experience in developing transit labor-management apprenticeship programs. As a result, in August, the Federal Transit Administration announced the creation of the first-ever *National Transit Workforce Center* for frontline employees. The Center will conduct technical assistance activities for transit agencies with a strong focus on frontline transit worker skill development. It will serve as a hub to help transit agencies recruit, hire, train, and retain the diverse workforce needed now and in the future. The Center will help address the long-term needs of the national transit workforce and improve diversity and equity in our industry. The Workforce Center will be headquartered at the International Transportation Learning Center, which is chaired by International President Costa. ❖



ATU SCHOLARSHIP COMPETITION

for the

2021-2022 ACADEMIC YEAR IN MEMORY OF OUR NINE LOCAL 265-SAN JOSE, CA BROTHERS



The 2021-2022 ATU Scholarship Awards are bestowed in remembrance of our beloved brothers from ATU Local 265 in San Jose, CA, who lives were taken in the tragic mass shooting at Santa Clara Valley Transit Authority (VTA) Guadalupe Rail Yard on May 26, 2021. Our brothers who were taken far too soon are:

Abdolvahab Alaghmandan, 63

Paul Delacruz Megia, age 42

Adrian Balleza, age 29

Timothy Michael Romo, age 49

Alex Ward Fitch, age 49

Michael Joseph Rudometkin, age 40

Jose Dejesus Hernandez III, age 35

Taptejdeep Singh, age 36

Lars Kepler Lane, age 63

“In dedicating these awards in honor of our brave nine brothers, may their memories live on,” said ATU International President John Costa. “We hope the recipients of these scholarships will further their education to study union and community organizing, and grow to fight injustices everywhere.”



THE OFFICIAL 2022 SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION FORM

RETURN COMPLETED APPLICATION **POSTMARKED NO LATER THAN JANUARY 31, 2022**

TO: ATU SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM, AMALGAMATED TRANSIT UNION, 10000 NEW HAMPSHIRE AVENUE, SILVER SPRING, MD 20903

PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE

Name of Applicant: _____
(First)(Middle) (Last)

High School Address: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Name of Principal: _____

Name of Sponsoring ATU Member: _____

List in order of preference, the accredited colleges, technical or vocational institutions to which you are applying for admission (no abbreviations):

ATU Member's Local Union Number: _____

1. _____

Relationship of applicant to ATU member: _____
(Self, Child, Stepchild)

2. _____

High School: _____

3. _____

Month & Year of Graduation: _____

I hereby certify that to the best of my knowledge and belief the above information is true and correct.

Applicant's Signature _____ Date _____



ATU Canada Fights for Washroom Access for Transit Operators in Ontario

ATU Canada is decrying the new washroom access mandate in Ontario for delivery workers from the Ford government, saying that it should also include transit operators.

The mandate covers a large breadth of delivery workers and transport drivers, including truck drivers, couriers, food delivery workers, and Canada Post delivery employees but leaves out essential transit workers.

“There is no reason why transit workers should have been left out of this legislation,” said ATU Canada President John Di Nino. “Access to bathrooms is a health and safety problem for all those in the transport sector, and our union has been leading the fight for years, so this announcement, as well as the lack of consultation, comes as a slap in the face.”

Access to bathrooms is a health and safety problem for all those in the transport sector, and the ATU has been leading the fight for years in both Canada and the U.S.

For years, transit operators have avoided drinking water during the workday, relieved themselves into bottles or on the street, and even soiled themselves in the line of duty. The problem is especially prevalent for pregnant and older

operators, those with medical conditions of the bladder or bowels, and for people taking diuretic medication. A 2011 study published in *Neurology and Urodynamics* revealed that driving with an extreme urge to use the bathroom affects attention and thinking – equal to that of staying awake for 24 hours or a .05% blood alcohol content, close to the legal limit.

As the legislation moves forward, ATU Canada will continue to steadfastly fight to ensure that transit workers in Ontario are included in this vital piece of legislation and secure their dignity on the job. ❖



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The ATU Stands with Indigenous Communities

This year on Canada Day and the first-ever National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, the ATU stood with Indigenous communities and the lost children and survivors who endured generations of abuse at the hands of residential schools throughout Canada.

“Public recognition of these tragedies is a critical piece of the reconciliation process. Over 150,000 Indigenous children were separated from their families and communities to attend these residential schools,” said International President John Costa to commemorate the holiday.

The atrocities that began in 1831 spanned more than a century, with the last school closing in 1998. Many of these children, who were taken away from their families and communities, also lost their lives, with thousands of them being tragically discovered in unmarked graves at the former residential schools.

“Real reconciliation means more than a national holiday. We must never forget what happened and must continue to speak the truth about this dark chapter in Canada’s history,” Costa continued. “Indigenous communities across Canada deserve truth and justice.”

The ATU also demands that cities rename transit stations that have been named after the architects of the residential school system, as well as enact the 94 recommendations in the Truth and Reconciliation Report and the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls report. ❖



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 instagram.com/atucomms

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 youtube.com/user/stpatuorg



Driver assaults rise amidst the pandemic

Every year, thousands of bus operators throughout North America are attacked while on the job. Transit workers have been spit on, hit in the head, punched in the face, and in the worst-case scenarios, killed. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, these dangerous attacks have increased, with transit operators acting as “mask police” to enforce mask mandates on public transit to keep themselves and their passengers safe.

Since many of these brutal assaults happen while the driver is behind the wheel of a 40,000-pound vehicle, these attacks aren't just endangering transit workers but passengers, pedestrians, and other vehicles.



75 percent of transit workers “fear for their safety”

An ATU survey reports that more than 75% of transit workers “fear for their safety on a daily basis” due to the risk of being assaulted. Being a transit worker has never been an easy job. Long hours and dangerous conditions put workers’ lives at risk every day, especially during the pandemic.

Report after report has come in of drivers being physically, verbally, and sexually assaulted by passengers. In Atlanta, GA, 44 assaults took place on MARTA buses in six months during the pandemic, 29 of them were on bus operators, members of Local 732-Atlanta, GA. In Erie, PA, a member of Local 568-Erie, PA, working as an Erie Metropolitan Transit Authority bus driver, was assaulted by a passenger after the passenger became irate over the federally imposed mask mandate. In New York, NY, a man pepper-sprayed an on-duty bus driver in the Bronx. In Staten Island, NY, a Local 726-Staten Island bus operator was punched in the face.

The ATU aggressively advocates for better safety and protection

The U.S. bipartisan infrastructure bill passed by Congress includes critical language from the ATU-backed Transit Worker and Pedestrian Protection Act that will make critical safety improvements to protect the lives of transit workers and passengers. For the first time, transit agencies will be required to take appropriate actions to ensure that workers are protected from these vicious attacks, improving safety conditions for everyone.

Also, while 30 states have passed legislation enhancing the penalties for assaulting transit operators, some transit agencies are actively undermining the efforts of the ATU to push for more protections. Local 508-Halifax, NS, has been fighting back after Halifax Transit removed mandatory shields on all new bus orders.

The ATU continues to aggressively advocate for safer bus operator workstations that have physical barriers and escape routes. It's the very least agencies can do to protect drivers against assaults and save lives. ❖

NOT ONE MORE

The ATU says damning IPCC report shows need for transformative change and a Green New Deal

A grave report recently released by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the United Nations body for assessing the science related to climate change, stressed the limited time we have to mitigate the irrevocable effects of climate change, including more investment in public transit says the ATU.

The report that Secretary-General of the UN Antonio Guterres called a “code red for humanity” said that it is now indisputable that human influence has caused unprecedented warming and that the situation is almost certain to worsen for decades to come. Low-lying lands and coastal communities are extremely vulnerable, and oceans could very likely rise as high as two meters.

“This report cements the urgent cries that we have been hearing throughout the past several years for

transformative change and a Green New Deal that needs to include things such as heavily expanding and investing in our public transit systems and putting forward measures that eases workers into a just transition,” said International President John Costa. “Anything less could be disastrous and leave millions behind in a worst-case scenario.”

As part of this effort to combat climate change, transit agencies should be purchasing zero-emission vehicles. The ATU believes transit agencies must work with the ATU to develop innovative apprenticeship and training programs to ensure transit workers are prepared to repair, maintain and operate these vehicles. ❖



ATU MS Golf Tournament raises critical funds for MS research

The ATU held its 35th Multiple Sclerosis Research Fund Golf Tournament from September 26-27 at the Renditions Golf Course in Davidsonville, MD. It was a great day for the ATU as more than 100 golfers came out for this amazing cause. This year, ATU Locals, other unions, supporters, and guests raised more than \$68,000 for the ATU MS Research Fund to support ongoing research to help end MS.

After a day of golfing on the course, International President John Costa and International Secretary-Treasurer Ken Kirk addressed participants, thanking them for attending the tournament and supporting the ATU MS Research Fund. Costa also praised all ATU Locals and their members for being heroes by keeping their communities and economies moving throughout the pandemic.

The ATU Multiple Sclerosis Research Fund has been raising money to help find a cure for MS for more than 35 years. The cause of MS is still unknown. Scientists believe that a combination of environmental and genetic factors contributes to the risk of developing multiple sclerosis. MS affects more than 2.3 million worldwide. Thank you to everyone who sponsored, golfed, and donated to help the ATU raise funds needed to help find a cure for MS. We look forward to seeing everyone at future events for this great cause.



Milton Transit Drivers in Ontario Join the ATU

After a hard-fought campaign led by Local 1572-Mississauga, ON, transit drivers in Milton, Ontario, voted in an overwhelming 80% majority to join the ATU.

The ATU was contacted by a retired ATU member who said that his coworkers were demanding representation and protection from their private contractor Pacific Western Transit.

The organizing drive began when Local President Jack Jackson and Vice President Joe Martins, along with ATU Canada President John Di Nino, held a mass meeting outdoors with a majority of transit operators. After everyone reached a consensus that the ATU was the proper fit, a majority signed membership cards, and the Local filed for an election.

Some of the key issues for the workers included unfair sign-ups, sick days, and lack of protection for on-demand and paratransit workers.



Milton Transit is operated by Pacific Western, Canada's largest family-owned private transit provider. The ATU represents four bargaining units in three provinces—British Columbia, Alberta, and Ontario. Milton is the fifth bargaining unit represented by the ATU. The Local will begin working with the Milton Transit workers to conduct contract surveys and develop a strong issues program to take into bargaining. ❖

ATU International Representative Sesil Rubain announces retirement

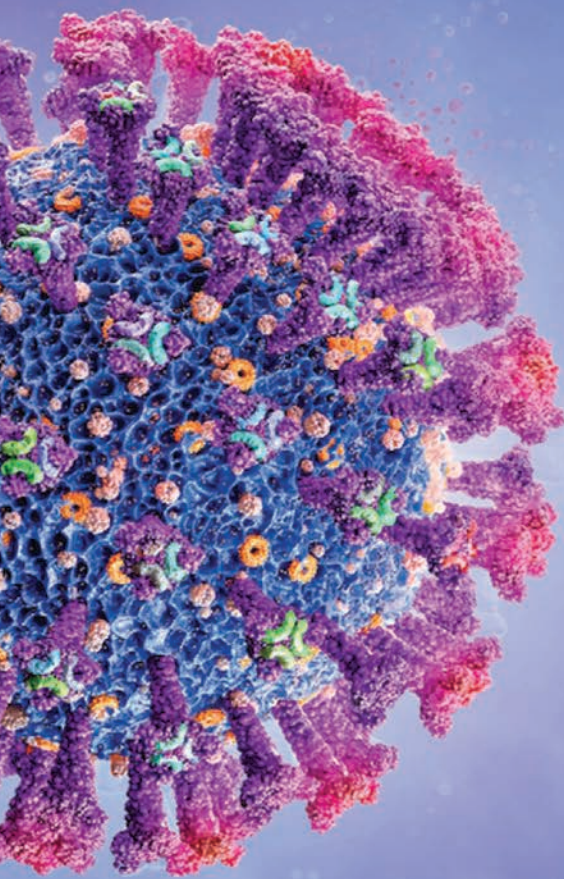


ATU International Representative Sesil Rubain announced his retirement effective September 30, 2021, after more than 45 years as an ATU member.

“We congratulate Sesil on his well-deserved retirement after more than 45 years of distinguished service at the ATU,” said ATU International President John Costa. “From your days as a shop steward to the picket lines of the Greyhound strike to your tireless work as an International Representative, you have impacted our Union and improved the lives of countless members and their families. We wish you and your family all the best in your retirement.”

Rubain began his career at the ATU as a member of Local 268-Cleveland, OH, serving as a transit bus operator for the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority. In 1972, he became a bus operator for intercity bus operator Goldline and served as a shop steward for Local 1098-Tuxedo, MD. Then in 1979, Rubain moved to Continental Trailways and eventually Greyhound as a member of Local 1098, which eventually became Local 1700.

During the 1990 Greyhound strike, Rubain was a captain on the picket line for the duration of the three-year strike. In 2005, he was appointed as a shop steward for Local 1700 and a year later was elected Financial Secretary of the Local. Then on August 1, 2015, the late International President Larry Hanley appointed Rubain as an ATU International Representative.



DELTA VARIANT:

The ATU demands enhanced safety precautions for workers and riders

With the more contagious COVID-19 Delta variant spreading, the ATU is demanding that transit agencies and providers across the U.S. and Canada enhance their now relaxed safety precautions.

Transit agencies have received billions in federal relief

“The transit industry is better equipped to deal with the pandemic than ever,” wrote International President John Costa in a letter to the transit agencies. “We have received billions of dollars in federal funding to address the pandemic. We have developed technical expertise in transmission and hazard abatement. Supply chain problems for PPE have been worked out.”

The letter laid out specific demands for transit agencies and employers to work with the ATU to better protect transit workers. These include making personal protective equipment available for all employees and masks for passengers, better air quality on vehicles, filtration and disinfection of buses, prevention of overcrowding on vehicles, return to rear-door boarding, free and convenient COVID-19 testing, much-deserved hazard pay, and pandemic leave.



“The industry knows what needs to be done to protect transit workers and passengers, and it has the resources necessary to get it done. The transit industry must stop the infections and loss of life which transit workers have suffered during this pandemic,” the letter concluded. ❖



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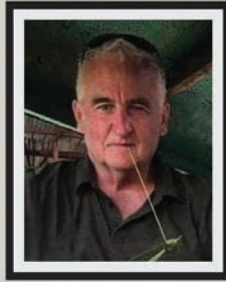


As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, ATU mourns the deaths of those members who put their lives on the line as essential frontline workers during this global crisis. We send our deepest sympathies and condolences to their families, extended families, friends, their locals, and all who knew them. Below we honor our members lost to this deadly virus since the last *In Transit* was published.





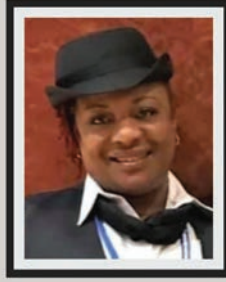
Norm Heppner - Local 615



Steven Coleman - Local 788



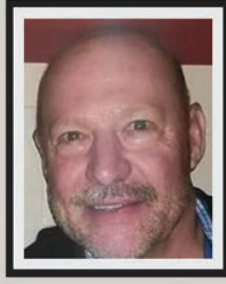
Senda Farlow - Local 788



Jarrold Statler - Local 788



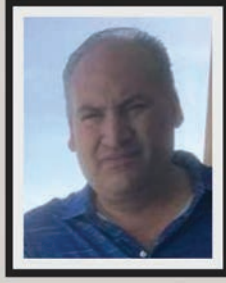
David Sapp - Local 842



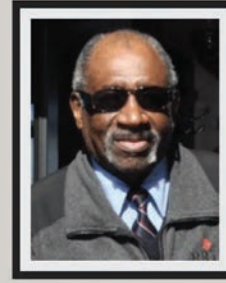
Randy Matter - Local 843



John Rubesch - Local 1005



David C. Williams - Local 1241



Kevin M. Trietley - Local 1342



Gary Munoz - Local 1433





FHE Health for ATU Members and Their Family

Challenging times call for solutions when your behavioral health is at risk. ATU members have access to Union Employee Assistance when you or a family member are struggling with a dependency or behavioral health issue.

Call or text 267-249-0513 to get confidential care with an accredited program that keeps you fit for duty with no restrictions.

Una tragedia impensable

Paren de llamarnos héroes

Cuando empezó la pandemia en marzo de 2020, a la mayoría de las personas se les pidió que se quedaran en casa y no fueran al trabajo para detener la propagación del virus mortal. Pero nuestros miembros continuaron presentándose valientemente al trabajo para proporcionar transporte crítico para enfermeras, empleados de supermercados y otros trabajadores esenciales en la primera línea de esta crisis.

Después de que un conmovedor video de Facebook de nuestro compañero del Local 26-Detroit, MI, Jason Hargrove, quien murió de COVID-19, se volvió viral, los medios, las agencias de transporte y los políticos finalmente comenzaron a reconocer de forma legítima a nosotros y a todos los trabajadores del transporte como héroes.

Pero ya estoy harto de que la gente nos llame héroes cuando tenemos que luchar con uñas y dientes contra las empresas y las agencias de transporte que intentan quitarnos todo lo que pueden en la mesa de negociaciones después de que nuestros miembros sacrificaron tanto durante la pandemia, algunos incluso dando sus vidas.

Estoy harto de que la gente nos llame héroes cuando todavía estamos luchando para proteger a nuestros miembros tanto del COVID-19 como de los ataques diarios.

Estoy harto de que la gente nos llame héroes cuando todavía tenemos escasez de autobuses escolares porque las empresas se niegan a pagarles a los trabajadores de los autobuses escolares un salario competitivo.

Estoy harto de que la gente nos llame héroes y luego no haga nada para abordar la crisis de salud mental en nuestros lugares de trabajo.

Paguen y protejan a los trabajadores del transporte

ATU no ha retrocedido ni retrocederá en la lucha por lo que nuestros miembros necesitan y se merecen. A nivel nacional en los EE. UU., ATU ha estado abogando agresivamente en nombre del financiamiento y la protección para el transporte público y nuestros miembros a través de la agenda Build Back Better del presidente Biden. Debido a la incansable defensa de ATU, estamos a punto de ganar \$39 mil millones históricos para transporte y \$10 mil millones adicionales a través de la reconciliación. Esperamos tener un éxito similar en Canadá, donde ATU ha estado luchando sin parar por obtener fondos para mantener el transporte público en funcionamiento.

Debido al proyecto de ley de infraestructura en los EE. UU., los trabajadores del transporte también estarán mejor protegidos contra las agresiones. El proyecto de ley incluye lenguaje de la Ley de Protección para Trabajadores del Transporte y Peatones, una prioridad desde hace mucho tiempo para ATU. No pasa una semana en la que no escuchamos que un trabajador del transporte ha sido golpeado, escupido, maltratado verbalmente o algo peor por parte de los pasajeros, sin embargo, las agencias de transporte no hacen nada. Los ataques a los trabajadores del transporte público se han ignorado durante demasiado tiempo.

Alzándonos en solidaridad con TWU y todos los trabajadores

La solidaridad es la base del movimiento sindical. Es por eso que tuve el honor de unirme a nuestros aliados, el Sindicato de Trabajadores del Transporte (TWU), para su 26ª Convención Constitucional en Las Vegas, NV, este año. ATU y el TWU han trabajado como socios durante toda la pandemia para garantizar que nuestros miembros estén protegidos en el trabajo, incluyendo

la obtención de fondos federales de ayuda COVID para mantener a nuestros miembros empleados y los sistemas de transporte público en funcionamiento.

Mientras hablaba con sus delegados, recordé a los cientos de miembros de nuestros dos sindicatos que perdieron la vida debido a la pandemia y el hecho de que las agencias de transporte todavía tienen el descaro de negar a los trabajadores esenciales el pago por peligrosidad por sus sacrificios. Todavía tienen el descaro de no instalar protectores de seguridad para los conductores a pesar de que los conductores continúan siendo atacados en el trabajo. Es vergonzoso. Cuando terminé mi discurso, dediqué un par de palabras de mi elección para las agencias de transporte que se niegan a proteger a sus trabajadores. F@€% YOU!

Continuaremos enfrentándonos a las agencias de transporte en solidaridad con el TWU y construyendo alianzas más profundas con nuestros sindicatos compañeros, incluidos los miles de trabajadores que están en huelga o amenazando con hacer huelga en América del Norte.

Comunidades indígenas canadienses

ATU no solo apoya a los trabajadores. Apoyamos a todas las comunidades marginadas. Es por eso que ATU continúa denunciando las atrocidades cometidas contra los niños durante más de un siglo en las escuelas residenciales de Canadá. Este año, en el Día de Canadá y el Día Nacional de la Verdad y la Reconciliación, nos unimos a las comunidades indígenas para pedir un día de reflexión en lugar de celebración después de que se encontraron cientos de restos de niños en tumbas sin identificar en una escuela residencial en Saskatchewan. Me enorgullece que ATU haya elegido apoyar a las comunidades indígenas en su lucha por la justicia.

ATU continúa liderando el camino a través de la organización

Con todo lo que está sucediendo, es fácil perder la concentración o sentirse abrumado por la cantidad de injusticia que hay en el mundo, pero sepa que su sindicato siempre estará aquí luchando por lo que es correcto. Estoy orgulloso de los Locales que trabajaron duro para expandir el impacto de ATU, ya sea dando la bienvenida a nuevos miembros, asegurando buenos contratos o ganando campañas electorales. La organización sigue siendo el núcleo de lo que hacemos frente a los desafíos extremos.

En Canadá, obtuvimos victorias significativas en las elecciones municipales de Alberta después de que los miembros de ATU hicieron un trabajo extraordinario para cambiar el panorama político en la provincia al elegir candidatos que comparten nuestros valores. Nuestros miembros estuvieron organizándose mucho antes de que se hicieran los respaldos políticos, aumentando la solidaridad y participación, lo cual fue fundamental para estas victorias, incluida la elección de uno de los nuestros, Amarjeet Sohi, ex operador de autobuses del Local 569, y ahora alcalde electo de Edmonton.

En California, el Local 1756-Arcadia, CA, lanzó una exitosa campaña "Times Up Transdev" que llevó al Local de ser administrador a ratificar un contrato que convierte a nuestros miembros en los operadores de autobuses mejor pagados de su región. Lo lograron mediante su compromiso con la organización, dando a los trabajadores una voz en la mesa de negociación y movilizándose de forma continua y estratégica para involucrar a los miembros.

Estas campañas nos dan esperanza a todos y nos recuerdan nuestra fuerza cuando nos unimos para luchar al unísono. Juntos podemos elegir representantes que no solo nos comprendan, sino que sean nosotros. Juntos podemos organizar nuestros lugares de trabajo para asegurar mejores contratos para los trabajadores y sus familias. Y juntos, podemos asegurarnos de que los trabajadores del transporte no solo sean llamados héroes por los políticos y las agencias de transporte, sino que sean tratados como los héroes que realmente son. Es un honor para mí continuar esta lucha junto a ustedes. ❖

Cessez de nous qualifier de héros

Lorsque la pandémie a débuté en mars 2020, la plupart des gens ont été priés de rester à la maison et de ne pas aller travailler pour arrêter la propagation de ce virus mortel. Mais nos membres ont continué courageusement à aller travailler pour assurer le transport nécessaire aux infirmières, aux employés de l'alimentation et aux autres travailleurs essentiels se trouvant aux premières lignes de cette crise.

Après qu'une vidéo émouvante de notre camarade Jason Hargrove, de la section locale 26 de Détroit, MI, et qui est mort du COVID-19, est devenue virale sur Facebook, les médias, les organismes de transport et les politiciens ont finalement commencé à reconnaître, que nous-mêmes ainsi que tous les travailleurs des transports en commun sommes des héros.

Mais j'en ai assez qu'on nous qualifie de héros alors que nous devons lutter avec acharnement pour que les organismes et compagnies de transport ne nous retirent pas tout ce qu'elles peuvent à la table de négociation, après que nos membres ont tant sacrifié pendant la pandémie, certains y laissant même leur vie.

J'en ai assez qu'on nous qualifie de héros alors que nous continuons à nous battre pour protéger nos membres du COVID-19 ainsi que des agressions quotidiennes.

J'en ai assez qu'on nous qualifie de héros alors que nous faisons toujours face à l'insuffisance de bus scolaires, parce que les sociétés de transport refusent de payer un salaire compétitif aux conducteurs d'autobus scolaires.

J'en ai assez qu'on nous qualifie de héros et qu'on ne fasse rien pour résoudre la crise de santé mentale sur nos lieux de travail.

Payer et protéger les travailleurs des transports en commun

L'ATU n'a pas reculé et ne reculera pas dans son combat pour que nos membres aient ce dont ils ont besoin et qu'ils méritent. A l'échelle nationale aux États-Unis, l'ATU soutient vigoureusement le financement et la protection du transport et de nos membres grâce au *Build Back Better agenda* (reconstruire un meilleur programme) du Président Biden. Grâce au soutien infatigable de l'ATU, nous sommes sur le point de gagner la somme historique de 39 milliards de dollars et de 10 milliards supplémentaires grâce au processus de réconciliation. Nous comptons sur un succès semblable au Canada, où l'ATU lutte sans cesse pour un financement nécessaire à la continuation des transports.

A cause de la loi sur l'infrastructure aux États-Unis, les travailleurs des transports seront également mieux protégés des agressions. Le projet de loi inclut un texte de la loi sur la protection des travailleurs des transports et des piétons (Transit Worker and Pedestrian Protection Act), qui est une priorité de l'ATU depuis longtemps. Il ne se passe pas une semaine qu'on n'entende dire que des passagers ont frappé, insulté ou craché sur un travailleur des transports. Pourtant, les organismes de transport en commun ne font rien. Les attaques des travailleurs des transports sont ignorées depuis trop longtemps.

Manifester notre solidarité avec TWU et tous les travailleurs

La solidarité est le fondement même du mouvement syndical. C'est pourquoi j'ai eu l'honneur de rejoindre nos alliés, le Syndicat des travailleurs des transports, (Transit Workers Union, TWU) à Las Vegas, NV, cette année. L'ATU et la TWU ont été partenaires tout au long de la pandémie pour veiller à ce que nos membres soient protégés sur le lieu de travail, notamment en obtenant un financement fédéral de secours pour que nos membres puissent continuer à travailler et que le transport continue.

En parlant à leurs délégués, je me suis souvenu des centaines de membres de nos deux syndicats qui ont perdu la vie à cause de la pandémie, et du fait que les organismes de transport ont encore le toupet de refuser la prime de risque aux travailleurs essentiels pour leurs sacrifices. Ils ont encore le toupet de ne pas installer d'écrans protecteurs pour les conducteurs, bien que ceux-ci continuent à être agressés sur leur lieu de travail. C'est une honte. En terminant mon discours, j'ai employé quelques mots bien choisis pour décrire les organismes de transport qui refusent de protéger leurs travailleurs. ALLEZ VOUS FAIRE F...E !

Nous continuerons à tenir tête aux organismes de transport par solidarité avec la TWU et à forger des alliances plus solides avec nos collègues syndicaux, notamment les milliers de travailleurs qui sont en grève ou qui menacent de le faire dans toute l'Amérique du Nord.

Communautés autochtones canadiennes

L'ATU n'est pas que du côté des travailleurs. Nous sommes du côté de toutes les communautés marginalisées. C'est pourquoi l'ATU continue à parler des atrocités qui ont eu lieu à l'égard des enfants pendant plus d'un siècle dans les pensionnats autochtones du Canada. Cette année, lors de la fête du Canada et de la Journée nationale de la vérité et de la réconciliation, nous avons rejoint les collectivités autochtones pour organiser une journée de réflexion plutôt qu'une fête, après que des restes d'enfants aient été trouvés dans des tombes anonymes sur les lieux d'un pensionnat du Saskatchewan. Je suis fier du fait que l'ATU a choisi d'être du côté des collectivités autochtones lors de leur combat pour la justice.

L'ATU continue à montrer la voie à suivre grâce au travail de syndicalisation

Il se passe tellement de choses en ce moment qu'il est facile de se disperser ou d'être submergé par toute l'injustice dans le monde, mais sachez que votre syndicat sera toujours là et sera toujours prêt à combattre pour la justice. Je suis fier des sections locales qui ont effectué un travail acharné pour améliorer l'impact de l'ATU, que ce soit pour accueillir de nouveaux membres, obtenir de bons contrats ou gagner les campagnes électorales. La syndicalisation continue à être au cœur de ce que nous faisons pour relever des défis extrêmes.

Au Canada, nous avons connu des victoires importantes aux élections municipales de l'Alberta après que les membres de l'ATU aient énormément travaillé au changement du paysage politique dans la province en élisant des candidats qui partagent nos valeurs. Nos membres avaient travaillé à la syndicalisation longtemps avant que les décisions de soutien aient été faites, forgeant ainsi solidarité et participation, cela étant essentiel pour obtenir ces victoires, notamment l'élection d'un des nôtres, Amarjeet Sohi, conducteur de bus qui était auparavant membre de la section locale **569 et qui est à présent le maire élu d'Edmonton**.

En Californie, la section locale **1756-Arcadia, CA**, a lancé une campagne *Times Up Transdev* très réussie qui a fait passer la section locale d'une gestion en fiducie à la ratification d'un contrat qui fait de nos membres les conducteurs de bus les mieux payés de leur région. Ils l'ont fait en s'engageant à la syndicalisation, en donnant la parole aux travailleurs à la table de négociation et en poursuivant une mobilisation stratégique et continue pour faire participer les membres.

Ces campagnes nous donnent à tous de l'espoir et nous rappellent que nous sommes forts lorsque nous combattons ensemble. Tous ensemble nous pouvons élire des représentants qui, non seulement nous comprennent, mais qui font partie de nous. Tous ensemble nous pouvons mieux organiser nos lieux de travail afin d'obtenir de meilleurs contrats pour les travailleurs et leurs familles. Et tous ensemble, nous pouvons veiller à ce que les travailleurs ne soient pas seulement qualifiés de héros par les politiciens et les organismes de transport, mais qu'ils soient traités comme les héros qu'ils sont véritablement. C'est un honneur pour moi de poursuivre ce combat à vos côtés. ❖

In Memoriam

Death Benefits Awarded April 1 - June 30, 2021

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OWEN GEORGE JONES
JAMES F KIRBY

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LAURA SIMMONS

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ARTHUR ANDREW BRENNAN
PATRICIA DAYE
CHARLES B JONES
RUSSELL A JUMPER
MARLIN W MC GRAW
THOMAS D MOORE
JOSEPH OLASIN JR
DONALD N RESTAURI
WILSON W RINGEISEN
KIRG J RUPERT
WILLIAM F SANFORD
PAUL J SITLER
MARLENE A THOMAS
PENNY THOMAS

113- TORONTO, ON

JOHN GROBIN

134- VANCOUVER, BC

CONRAD F SCHWANDER

164- WILKES-BARRE, PA

GEORGE HORST

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T J RAYMOND CALHOUN
CLARENCE W EPPS
CHARLES E HENRY
ISAAC M HURNS
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BENEDICT KUCALA
EDDIE LEVY JR
ROMEO R PARKER
FREIDA M PENNINGTON
DALLAS SMITH
BRENDA F WALKER
SHEILA R WILLIAMS
HODGE L WILSON

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JENNIE M BRAMLETT
ANDREW G BUTLER
ERICK C CAMPBELL
WILLIE J FORD
TAB R GIBBS
WILLIE L HAMPTON

BESSIE HARRISON
JAMES A HICKS
JAMES HURDLE
MICHAEL JONES
ALBERT S JONES JR
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RUFUS W MORRIS
JIMMIE MURPHY
CLEOPHIA PENDLETON
SANDY PORTIS JR
MIRTA R RODRIQUEZ
FLOYD W WILDER

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MICHEAL D HILL
ELMER LEON TWYMAN
JOHN G WELLS

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ROSE F FREGOSA
WILLIE J HORNE
ALVIN A PACIS
FLOYD A STROOPE
FEDERICO VILLANUEVA
THOMAS WYNDER

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BERNARDO FIGUEROA
RICHARD E PARSONS
ROBERT L SMITH

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ANDRE ALLARD
STUART BEACH
JACQUES B DELANGY
WILLIAM M FENNELL
CLAUDE GOUR
TIM G LEMOINE
GERALD A SEGUIN
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RONALD VILLENEUVE

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HENRY MORTON
NATHAN A SMITH

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MONROE BROWN JR
NATHAN E BRYANT

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CORNEL CORNER
KATY H DUNN
BEATRICE R JONES
AUGUSTUS P KLOPNER
IRMA J MC NEIL
FRANK QUEEN
RICARDO ROMAN
MARCUS STURGHILL
DAVID P WALKER

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WILLIAM G CONNER

416- PEORIA, IL

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425- HARTFORD, CT

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568- ERIE, PA

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KEVIN P MAHONEY
FRANCIS P MC GRATH
EDWARD MC PHERSON
CAROL A SCACCIA

WILLIAM D VEIGA
RICHARD WHEELER SR

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OVIDE L AUGER
WILLIAM WILLIAMS

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JOHN H KUHR

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EDMUND A BRAGER

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713- MEMPHIS, TN

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WILLIAM K MELTON
A C RICE

725- BIRMINGHAM, AL

LEE C SULLIVAN

726- STATEN ISLAND, NY

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JOHN B CRESCITELLI
MARCO DE RESPINO

JOHN M ENRIGHT
ALAN GRALLA
MARCELLO MACAUDA
RONALD MERRITT
CHARLES MONGELLI
WALTER SCHUMACHER

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EDWARD A DAHL
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JOHN G WILD

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