



Amalgamated Transit Union

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Office of the International President

March 20, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
S-230, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
S-221, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Leader McConnell, Speaker Pelosi, Leader Schumer, and Leader McCarthy:

While most Americans are now sheltering at home, some of us are considered essential. Doctors. Nurses. Police officers. Firefighters. And yes, TRANSIT WORKERS. Working from home is simply not an option for these brave individuals.



Since the public health crisis began, Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) members have been heroically coming to work every day, frightened that they are putting themselves and their families at risk of contracting the Coronavirus. They drive the bus as they were trained to do. Each time a sick passenger coughs just a few feet behind them, the bus operator's hands grip the wheel a bit tighter, and their whole body trembles, knowing that the virus may be in the air. For our older members, it's a potential death sentence.

Our members have been asked to clean and sanitize bus and rail vehicles and facilities to keep Americans safe, wiping all surfaces within reach in an effort to eliminate an invisible enemy. They are doing this in many cases without the proper equipment needed to keep them safe. Masks, gloves, and cleaning materials are in short supply. Needless to say, there are better ways to make \$15 - \$20 per hour. Although this is not what our members signed up for, they continue to report to work.



Fare box revenue has of course plunged. Moreover, transit systems that heavily rely upon local sales taxes for their dedicated revenue source will be devastated by the closing of restaurants, bars, and shopping centers across the nation. With no money to operate, the agencies will soon be forced to shut down.

ATU joins the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) in urging Congress to provide \$16.0 billion in direct emergency funding to public transit agencies to offset some of their extraordinary direct costs and revenue losses caused by the Coronavirus, including \$950 million for rural, small urban and elderly/disabled programs as recommended by the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA).

We fully realize that there is currently an endless line of industries looking for a federal bailout. Please know that our so-called “choice” riders are gone. If you are riding the bus or train nowadays, you are transit dependent. You are probably poor, and don’t likely have a car of your own. You need transit to get to the grocery store, the doctor, and the pharmacy. Without the bus, these people would be stranded at home. That’s why public transportation is considered an essential public service. Please act immediately to save this lifeline in our communities. On behalf of the thousands of transit riders and workers in your State/Congressional District, thank you for your consideration of this urgent request.

For more information, please contact Jeff Rosenberg in the ATU Government Affairs Department at jrosenberg@atu.org or (202) 309-4108.

Sincerely,

John A. Costa
International President

c: All Members of Congress

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PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

“What are transit systems doing to protect their workers amid coronavirus outbreak?”

— March 17, 2020



Coronavirus sends public transit ridership plummeting, agencies in 'financial calamity' seek billions

— March 19, 2020

DAILY NEWS

“MTA allows all transit workers to wear face masks amid coronavirus mania”

— March 9, 2020



WAMC NORTHEAST
PUBLIC RADIO

“Regional Transit Authorities Adjust To Coronavirus Pandemic”

— March 19, 2020