**NEWS BRIEFS**

**ALLEGHENY COUNTY, PA** - Devastating cuts facing ACCESS riders will not occur as threatened in September under a special funding arrangement, according to the Port Authority of Allegheny County. “This will make a tremendous difference for people with disabilities living outside the Port Authority service area who depend on ACCESS,” said Lucy Spruill, an ACCESS rider and the public policy director for United Cerebral Palsy/Community Living and Support Services. “This will allow those riders to leave their homes for work, health care and to enjoy meaningful lives,” she said.

**WASHINGTON, DC** - ATU has signed on to the ever growing list of organizations who are joining the Hyatt housekeepers’ boycott of the hotel chain. Hyatt has abused housekeepers and other hotel workers, replacing longtime employees with minimum wage temporary workers and imposing dangerous workloads on those who remain. In response, Hyatt workers have taken bold steps to end mistreatment, speaking publicly about abuses, going on strike, and now, launching a global boycott.

**INTERNATIONAL OFFICERS EMERITUS**

International President Jim La Sala, ret.
International President Warren George, ret.
International Executive Vice President Ellis Franklin, ret.
International Executive Vice President Mike Siano, ret.

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**WASHINGTON, DC** - President Christopher W. Bruce, said the deal came after negotiations between the company and Local 22 that operates the Worcester Regional Transit Authority and Local 22 reached agreement on a new three-year contract that includes a pay raise for each of the next three years. Local 22 President Ellis Franklin, ret. said the deal came even though both sides started out with very different interests when negotiations began in May. “We were happy to get improvements for all the members while increasing wages during these tough times,” Bruce said.

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**ROCKING THE TRANSIT WORLD: ATU IN CONCERT 2012**

**WHERE DOES ROMNEY STAND ON ATU ISSUES?**

**TRANSIT CUTS SEPARATE POOR FROM JOBS**

**TRANSIT CUTS COULD COST MORE THAN DEFICIT**

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**Subscription Information**

Throughout my union life I have often reflected on the sacrifices people have made over the past century to build our labor movement. Our generation is now witnessing a real struggle to save that labor movement. But to win – to rebuild the middle class – we have to do more than just witness it.

And, I’m inviting you to do just that on Sunday, September 30, at 7:00 EDT.

That’s when every ATU member can join me and local leaders from all over America to plan how we are going to win the November election in the U.S. – for our families and our riders.

We need to engage, and we need to get out of our “comfort zone,” and work in the coming 10 weeks before the general election.

Unfairness is all around us. We all know people who have lost jobs or cannot get one. Many of us have children, well into their 20s, still at home with no work.

We have socialism for the rich, and harsh unregulated capitalism for the poor. We have a Congress that is frozen – refusing to act on sensible programs like expanding mass transit.

But, the power to change that is in our hands. They have not heard enough from us or our co-victims – transit riders.

The ATU program is to build alliances with our riders. This year, with a presidential election in the U.S., the focus must be on getting our friends, our families, and yes, our passengers, to vote.

Your local union is gearing up right now. In this magazine and on our website you will see ATU members all over who are saying – “Yes, I’m In!”

That’s what we need each and every member to do. Commit to your brothers and sisters that in the five weeks beginning October 1, you will do your part to get our community to VOTE.

Registration

This means making sure they can vote by asking now if they, and every member of their family, are registered to vote. Then it means working with your local officers to build a campaign in your city and at your bus stops.

Our riders and our members have identical interests but often don’t see it that way. In many cities transit agencies have divided us from our passengers. In major cities there are campaigns run by elected officials telling the riders to unite to cut our wages – or face service cuts and fare increases.

We can end that by telling our riders the truth and by expanding their power by getting them ready to vote.

So mark your calendar for Sunday, September 30. Join ATU members from all over America in a huge ATU internet event to spell out our plan to rock the transit world!
Have you ever heard anyone say that unions aren’t necessary anymore?

I recently read two news articles that refute that contention. The first was about a $30 million grant the federal government is giving Detroit to buy and repair buses and make other upgrades.

Now, so many cuts have been made to Detroit’s transit system that some have questioned whether it will be able to continue at all. But Congress prefers to buy shiny new buses for cities like Detroit rather than giving them what they really need—money to run their transit systems.

Curious Parallels

It occurred to me that the situation curiously parallels some of the conditions that led to the formation of our Union.

In 1892, the horses that pulled streetcars worked only four-hour shifts while an operator could be forced to work 16 hours per day or more. When asked why, one transit owner replied, “horses cost money!” You see, the horses were a costly investment, but human labor was cheap.

Mass transit doesn’t use horses anymore. But like the horses in 1892, real money today is invested in the things the drivers operate, rather than the drivers themselves. And what about those long hours? Another story jumped out at me about that.

It described a new report on Washington, DC’s Metro system that revealed that even though Metro limits the things the drivers operate, rather than the drivers themselves—conditions that bear a remarkable resemblance to those of 1892.

So the next time someone tells you that elections don’t mean anything and unions aren’t necessary anymore, tell them about what’s happening in the transit industry and elsewhere.

Then remind them that the only reason you or anybody else, for that matter, receives a living wage and is treated fairly on the job is because unions are still fighting for it.

Also, add that a vote for Mitt Romney or any other anti-union candidate is a vote to reduce their own wages, benefits and working conditions. Let’s do whatever it takes to make sure none of us have to experience the truth of that statement.

In Solidarity,

Robert H. Baker, Sr.

Bob Baker

Unions—As Necessary As They’ve Ever Been

Working conditions are much better today than they were in 1892, and the drivers—those 20-hour days are paid overtime.

That’s true, in the public and in some of the private sector, but in over-the-road bus companies in the U.S. and Canada those statements are not true and don’t take into account the abysmal pay, benefits, and working conditions at non-union systems managed by private contractors. They don’t recognize the plight of non-union over-the-road drivers who are forced to work to the point of exhaustion for low pay and no overtime, and that safety for the driver and the passengers goes out the window.

An increasing number of our members are working for these same contractors who are doing everything they can to push their compensation and work rules back to those of their non-union employees—conditions that bear a remarkable resemblance to those of 1892.

Your vote more crucial than ever

Your vote for Barack Obama can prevent that from happening, and in a race as tight as this, your vote will be more crucial than ever.

But before that we need you to stand up as a beacon of truth against the barrage of lies that will flood the airwaves before the election.

Thanks, again, to the Citizens United decision, those GOP fat cats will be allowed to give more to Mitt Romney’s campaign than has ever been before, and if he is elected, they will expect him to do their bidding.

This is not a scare tactic; it’s simply the truth. The same people who are behind the campaign to cripple state worker unions are also contributing to Mitt Romney, and they want to replace you with a lower paid, non-union person.

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Thanks, again, to the Citizens United decision, corporations and unions can contribute as much as they like to campaigns. But, since big business has always contributed over 10 times as much as unions in the past, I expect that we’ll see a lot more “anti-” than “pro-” Obama advertising in this campaign.

Outrageous charges designed to appeal to voters’ fears and prejudices will emerge just as they did four years ago. They’ll say the president was not born in the United States, that he is a Muslim, and that he will take away our guns. They’ll say almost anything they think will scare us regardless of the truth.

They’ll insinuate that the president is someone who’s not like us, who’ll render us defenseless against his plans to destroy our way of life. Frankly, taken together, these fabrications appeal to the worst elements in our society, and they are all dead wrong.

Repeated lies thought true

These and other insidious lies will be repeated so often that many people will simply regard them as the truth. But, I’m counting on you not to be one of them.

Check out the things you see in the media, and be particularly suspicious of rumors that come via the internet or email. Objective websites like FactCheck.org can help you do that. I’m confident that if you know the truth you will vote for President Obama.

And please do vote. I know you’ve heard it all before, but this election truly is crucial to the future of transit and transit workers in America.

Don’t wake up the morning after the election regretting that you let other people decide your fate.

Oscar Owens, International Secretary-Treasurer

Don’t Let the Big GOP Fat Cats Fire You

A ll right, I’m going to get right to the point and tell you as plainly as I can why you should vote for President Obama:

Put simply, big Republican donors want to fire you and replace you with a non-union worker who’ll be paid a lot less.

Thanks to the Supreme Court’s Citizens United decision, those GOP fat cats will be allowed to give more to Mitt Romney’s campaign than has ever been contributed before, and if he is elected, they will expect him to do their bidding.

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Don’t wake up the morning after the election regretting that you let other people decide your fate.
In a mad dash to get long-overdue legislation done, Senate Democrats caved in to House Republicans’ demands for a bill which serves the GOP plan to starve mass transit. President Obama signed the bill, July 6.

Cities abandoned

The final bill does not include federal transit operating assistance to address fare increases, service cuts and layoffs. Overall funding for transit capital projects is funded just above current levels.

“This transportation bill is a death blow to public transportation; it not only does nothing to address the American mass transit crisis, but will make it much worse,” said ATU International President Larry Hanley.

Veolia, First Transit get a leg up

Although the bill does not include language that incentivizes contracting out, House Republicans secured provisions requiring the Department of Transportation to ensure that private low wage companies are further woven into the local planning process.

Over the next few years, DOT must set forth guidance and rules in this area, and ATU and transit labor will fight hard to ensure that working families’ issues are addressed. However, if Mitt Romney controls DOT, the new law could become a serious threat to transit workers.

Transit benefits

The tax-free transit benefit cap that, in 2009, was raised to $240 per month (same as the parking benefit) dropped to $125 per month at the end of 2011. The Senate bill would have brought that back up to $240 per month.

Incredibly, Senate Democrats gave in to House Republicans and dropped the provision to raise the benefit back to $240 per month in the final bill.

Public transportation safety

In the wake of some of the most serious rail accidents in history, the bill directs the secretary of transportation to develop safety standards for all systems (bus and rail). If an agency is found noncompliant with safety rules, the secretary may withhold federal funding or require up to 100% of those funds be used for corrective action.

Coalitions, accountability needed

ATU is deeply disappointed in this bill. It’s the latest example of why we need to ramp up activity with our community partners to ensure that the next time that our so-called legislator “friends” go into negotiations (and it won’t be long, as this bill will expire in just over two years) they know that they will need to answer to a much broader constituency.

Our attention now turns to the 2012 elections so that we can minimize the damage brought about by this shortsighted legislation.
Canadian Agenda

New Canadian director wants members to ‘believe, live ATU’

“I’m in my blood,” says newly-elected Canadian Director Stu Litwinowich, as he describes how he feels about the ATU. Litwinowich will be taking over the top spot of the Canadian Council from Stan Dera, who is retiring, after serving over two years in that position.

International President Larry Hanley offered his congratulations to the new director, adding, “Stu brings a wealth of experience and accomplishment to this important work. I look forward to working with him on issues of national and international importance.”

Hanley also expressed his thanks to Stan Dera who he said, “did an outstanding job as director during a difficult time of transition.”

President of Edmonton local since 2008

The new director has been a member of the Union since 1988 when he was hired as a bus operator in Edmonton, AB. He served the union as shop steward and Canadian Council representative before he was elected president of Local 569 - Edmonton, AB, in 2008, and re-elected in 2010.

Litwinowich is proud of the number of ATU and other union members his local has gotten elected to New Democratic Party posts as well as the Edmonton Council. And, he credits coalition building with other unions and like-minded groups for the political success he’s had there.

Priorities

In his new position Litwinowich will encourage all Canadian locals to do the same. Other priorities include organizing school bus drivers, making sure that smaller local officers get the education they need, and pursuing passage of the bill in Parliament that would make it a federal crime to attack a transit worker.

Litwinowich gives a lot of credit to former Canadian Directors Ken Foster, Robin West, and Dera whom he says established a firm foundation that he intends to build upon.

But, more than anything else, he says, he wants Canadian members to “believe in, and live ATU.” He wants members to have the tune “We Are Family” in their heads all the time, but with the word “family” replaced by “ATU”.

Talking to Stu, it’s obvious that ATU is deeply rooted in the man the Canadian Conference chose to lead their council. “ATU surrounds itself around our families,” he says. “Our great Union is a brotherhood like no other! Only ATU members know what it’s like to belong to such a dynamic organization because it’s in our every fiber. We breathe, live and bleed ATU.”

Election season has finally, arrived in the United States, and it is time for all ATU and all union members to stand up, be counted and make a difference. It is time for all ATU members to come together in solidarity to do whatever it takes to elect pro-Labor and pro-transit candidates to office.

Why this is the most important election in your lifetime?

1. Values.

Do you believe in the right of U.S. citizens to join together and bargain with their employer for a fair wage? Or do you believe in unlimited corporate power, with profits as the bottom line—which means squeezing wages and shipping jobs overseas?

It may sound overly dramatic, but that is the debate going on in the U.S. right now, and this election could decide which viewpoint wins.

Do you think your city should provide public services like transportation, firefighters and police? We have a Republican nominee who disagrees.
2. Transit is starving.
Many of you have already seen the endless cycle of service cuts and fare increases in your city. In Detroit, the mayor’s proposal of another round of transit cuts is leading some to question whether the system can survive at all.

In September, Pittsburgh’s transit authority will cut 46 of its remaining 102 routes (30 percent), ending service after 10 p.m. on all but 13 bus and rail routes. This is just the tip of the iceberg. For those of you who haven’t seen service cuts, don’t make the mistake of thinking this can’t happen to your system too.

Funding for transit has remained flat for the past six years, and the new transit bill will keep funding flat for the next two years. Can you think of anything that costs the same amount it did in 2006? Certainly not gasoline.

The transportation bill passed by Congress in July, encourages privatization of transit systems. While the ATU fought hard to preserve our Section 13(c) collective bargaining rights, which ensure that an outside management company cannot immediately cut transit workers’ wages, we can expect it to be challenged again, and, depending on who’s elected, we might not have any leverage to protect it.

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Finally, Congress failed to include much-needed operating assistance in the bill, which ATU and many of our allies championed. Without the flexibility to use federal dollars to operate systems, many cash-strapped cities are making deeper cuts to service and raising fares — sending their systems into a slow death-spiral and forcing riders to dig deeper into their pockets.

3. They don’t want our riders participating in democracy
If you are an operator, you see riders every day. Many transit riders are low-wage workers, senior citizens, people with disabilities, people of color, and students. Knowing who many of our riders traditionally turn out to vote for, some groups have passed legislation particularly in “swing states” — intended to discourage voting among these groups.

At least 11 states have passed “voter ID” laws, which make it impossible to vote without a state-issued photo identification card.

A study by the Brennan Center for Justice estimates that approximately one out of every 10 voters does not possess a valid photo ID, and in these 10 states, about half a million eligible voters live in households without a vehicle and reside 10 miles or more from an ID-issuing office.

State departments of motor vehicles are typically only open Monday through Friday, 9-5. Even with a car, or a bus route to the DMV, low wage workers, holding down two jobs will find it difficult to get a photo ID so they can vote?

If that doesn’t sound like much, consider that half a million is the margin the GOP needs for victory. Unless our Union and our riders turn out to vote by strong margins, these dirty tactics will cost us the election.

Are you IN?
With so much at stake in 2012, it is critical that the ATU mobilize at every level — and that includes YOU. Are you IN?

If you aren’t “IN” already you should be! You should print out the “I’m IN” sign by going to http://bit.ly/QFMFsH then take a picture or video of yourself holding the sign in front of you and let us know why you are “IN”.

This election cycle, the key really is you and your co-workers in the garage. The ATU needs you more than ever to volunteer – even if it’s only a couple hours a week – to help mobilize union members and engage riders to elect pro-transit and pro-worker candidates for office.

Since late 2010, ATU has been providing a new kind of training for union leaders, one that has helped them fight for transit. This summer, we’ve revolutionized the training program yet again. International vice presidents have been conducting political mobilization trainings with ATU members all over the U.S. These trainings have been held for small groups of locals, all within driving distance, so that anyone willing to get involved can attend at no cost to the local.

Already, IVPs have trained almost 400 members. These trainings are critical to developing ATU activists who can mobilize member volunteers and build coalitions with riders to elect pro-transit and labor-friendly candidates.

For the next three months, the International will be anchoring its political efforts in two cities that mean the most to the election: Cleveland, OH, and Denver, CO. These are big cities in crucial swing states, where the ATU has thousands of members.

Not only will ATU support the efforts of these two locals to mobilize their membership and get transit riders out to vote, it will also bring in local officers from around the U.S. to help as well.

In late September, it will hold a four day training and political engagement session for its U.S. officers in Cleveland and Denver.

These officers will participate in activities that will fire up riders in these two cities, and will also have opportunities to live plan fall 2012 actions for their own locals as well.

As part of these trainings an internet video town hall meeting will be held for all ATU members to hear why this election is the most important in our lifetime and how you can get involved.
ATU, VTA create innovative operator apprentice program

Tashme Godwin, 265-San Jose, CA, says she owes her transit career to the coaching she received from the JWI (Joint Workforce Investment) master driver mentors who helped her cope with the high-stress environment of mass transit as a bus operator apprentice. “It made the difference between whether I left or stayed,” she said.

Godwin was among the first graduates of an innovative apprentice program. “It made the difference between whether I left or stayed,” she said.

“Skilled craft”

VWI Director Tom Fink, 265, says the program is important “because it recognizes that bus operation is a skilled craft. Its apprentice model gives operators the tools they need to master the craft.”

Major systems worldwide train drivers very well in the safe operation of large vehicles, but seldom offer training or support in meeting the core human challenges of the work. Learning the professional service skills takes years, and attempting to do so without the guidance of master drivers too often results in failure: a lowered quality of public service, as well as a severely increased risk of stress-related illnesses for the operator.

“JWI gave me the tools for a successful career at VTA (Santa Clara, CA, Valley Transportation Authority),” is the way Bus Operator Jeremy Reese puts it.

Labor/management partnership

JWI, a transit training partnership between Local 265 and VTA, uses the building trades’ journeymen-apprentice program as a model for its bus operator apprentice training. Trained mentors ride along with new operators, and join them in the classroom several times during their first year.

Peer mentors also lead professional development and wellness coaching for veteran operators in the annual “re-train” required by the vehicle code.

Maintenance training

JWI’s highly successful and ongoing Mechanic Helper Program uses similar principles in training entry-level workers to attain the difficult promotion from bus fueler and cleaner to first level diesel mechanic, and beyond. The organization has developed skill upgrade programs for incumbent diesel mechanics and a leadership academy.

Service Mechanic Ronisha Moses says, “JWI’s program gave me the skills and confidence to seek out further challenges and achieve other goals.”

ATU/JWI goals:

JWI aims to create a high performance workplace that is good for workers, riders, and citizens. Their goals are to:

• Promote professional standards in order to help gain the voter and taxpayer support transit needs for adequate funding; craft excellence enhances the reputations of ATU, transit agencies and public employees alike.

• Strengthen ATU and the agency by reducing reliance on discipline, while placing greater emphasis on training, coaching, and support for the enforcement of workplace standards.

• Address then well-known elevated health risks of operators (stroke, diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, depression), through both professional development and wellness programs.

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Nathaniel Arnold, 192-Oakland, CA, has only been a bus driver four years, but he has quickly recognized the importance of getting involved in his union, the community and political action.

Affectionately known as “Big Brother”, Nathaniel uses his 20 years of experience in law enforcement working with at-risk youth and gang members in Los Angeles to connect with passengers and serve as advocate for ATU, Labor, and his community.

Passion, commitment

Local 192 President Yvonne Williams cites Nathaniel’s passion, commitment, and work building relationships with transportation advocacy groups as a critical reason local funding has increased and bus service has been protected in the County.

Williams says Nathaniel has dedicated hundreds of volunteer hours, personal time, and effort to ATU and the community. Nathaniel says he volunteers because he recognizes that establishing relationships with community-based organizations, politicians, clergy, and other allies is a crucial element not only in securing a fair and equitable contract, but also in fighting for better transit in Oakland.

Nathaniel points to the impact and the power the public — bus passengers — have on politicians and other decision-makers. It is critical, he says, that transit workers show they care about our passengers and that they share common interests and concerns.

“We can embrace our diversity”

Nathaniel explains, “We can embrace our diversity, find strength in it and prosper together, or we can focus on our differences and try to restrict access and limit prosperity for us all with the 1% getting richer and the rest of us fighting for what’s left.”

Why does Nathaniel dedicate so much time and energy to the ATU and his community? He summed it up simply saying, “You are my union brothers and sisters, my family; I love you dearly.”
MONCTON LATEST CITY TO TURN TO LOCKOUT PRESSURE PLOY

Will it ever end? As In Transit went to press, Local 1290 members in Moncton, NB, were entering the seventh week of a lockout that started on June 27. Codiac Transpo locked out its employees at the direction of the city council whose members contended that they did it to bring both sides back to the bargaining table.

The lockout is the latest action taken by Codiac managers for five months before the parties arrived at a contract in July/August 2012. Meanwhile in Moncton Local 1290 and Codiac Transpo returned to the bargaining table with a mediator on July 8, only to break off talks the following day.

Bad faith
Local President George Turple says the city offered even less than before, reinforcing the local’s labour board complaint charging that the city bargained in bad faith.

A threatened lockout was averted in January, when an agreement was reached between Local 107 and the Hamilton (ON) Street Railway. Local President George Turple says the city offered even less than before, reinforcing the local’s labour board complaint charging that the city bargained in bad faith.

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Diesel engine exhaust classified carcinogenic to humans

Bus operators, mechanics and other transit workers have worried for a long time about the diesel fumes they inhale every day on the job. The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) – part of the World Health Organization (WHO) – has now given transit workers more reason to be concerned about their health with their conclusion that diesel exhaust can cause cancer.

After deliberating for a week, IARC health experts classified diesel engine exhaust as carcinogenic to humans (Group 1), based on sufficient evidence that exposure is associated with an increased risk for lung cancer.

“The main studies that led to this conclusion were in highly exposed workers,” said Dr. Kurt Straif, head of the IARC Monographs Program. “However, we have learned from other carcinogens, such as radon, that initial studies showing a risk in heavily exposed occupational groups were followed by positive findings for the general population. Therefore actions to reduce exposures should encompass workers and the general population.”

This is not the first time diesel exhaust has been cited as a cause of cancer. In March the U.S. National Cancer Institute released a study of occupational exposure to such emissions in underground miners, which showed an increased risk for lung cancer in exposed workers.

In June, however, the Canadian federal government went to an Edmonton light rail station to test equipment designed to detect the presence of radiation or explosives. The three-week test involved five sensors that scan the air for signs of radioactive material and four special ticket validating machines that check for explosives.

The air scanners, of course, try to “sniff out” nuclear devices brought into the system, while the machines laminate the tickets with a special polymer coating that reveals trace amounts of explosives. Remarkably, if a machine detects explosive material it sends an alert to security and takes photos of the passenger, while the coating preserves the evidence.

Federal officials were particularly interested in finding out whether the devices would work without slowing passenger flow or transit service.
NEW STUDY CONFIRMS TRANSIT CUTS HURT WORKING POOR

“Riders and our members both feel the impact of these service cuts. That is why we must join together this election to fight for public transportation and elect pro-transit, pro-labor candidates.”
— International President Larry Hanley

For many years ATU has been one of the few national voices calling attention to the way transit cuts hurt those who can least afford them. Now a new study details how the cuts make an existing problem worse and impede America’s economic recovery.

According to a new report by the Brookings Institute transit service reductions hinder millions of people from finding or getting to a job, and this has an overwhelming effect on the poor.

Unemployed Nashville, TN delivery truck driver Lebron Stinson put it best, “I just can’t get there, man. I say to myself every day, ‘If I had transportation, I could do what I set out to do, find a job with fair pay and be productive.’ Where the Jobs Are: Employer Access to Labor by Transit examines how well the nation’s transit systems connect employers to their metropolitan labor pools.

Transit agencies do a great job running service into employers’ neighborhoods. An average of 75 percent of jobs in the nation’s 100 largest metropolitan areas are located in neighborhoods with transit service. However, the average worker can reach only 17 percent of metropolitan employers via transit in 90 minutes. This leaves huge areas with prospective employees out of reach. Read more: http://bit.ly/N9BP6T

This report underscores why this upcoming election is critical to the future of transit. International President Larry Hanley put it in perspective, “Riders and our members both feel the impact of these service cuts. That is why we must join together this election to fight for public transportation and elect pro-transit, pro-labor candidates.”

WHERE THE JOBS ARE: EMPLOYER ACCESS TO LABOR BY TRANSIT

Attack on Tampa driver highlights continuing driver assault problem

All too many ATU members can identify with a bus driver who is attacked. And some even know what it feels like when a battered driver tries to contact a dispatch operator through an on-board call box and… nothing happens.

That’s what happened to a Local 1593 member driving a Hillsborough Area Regional Transit (HART) bus in Tampa, FL. The local is demanding an investigation as part of an overall effort to make safety and security a priority at the agency.

Eventually, the HART driver struggled out of his seat belt, pushed the assailant off the bus, and used his cell phone to get through to dispatch.

Transit unions working to protect members

ATU and the Transport Workers Union (TWU) continue to address this issue through a joint committee that’s working hard to find ways to protect transit workers. The committee held the first-ever national conference on operator assaults this spring in Brooklyn, NY.

The event left no doubt in anybody’s mind that assaults continue to be one of the most difficult and widespread problems plaguing mass transit today.

A bus driver is assaulted every three days in America, and 40 percent of Canadian bus operators will be attacked during the course of their careers.

Canadians under siege

Canadian transit workers have been overwhelmed by an incredible surge of violence over the last decade. Already this summer, a cup of coffee was thrown at one operator, and another was beaten and pulled to the ground in a dispute over a fake bus ticket. The second driver was treated at a hospital for non-life-threatening injuries.

Those assaults made headlines because they both happened in Hamilton, ON, during the same weekend. But operators know that many more, if not most of these incidents are never reported or publicized.

Winnipeg, MB’s public works committee decided to explore the idea of granting more power to their 13 transit inspectors who respond to transit assaults. Currently, these inspectors are trained to calm disputes, but they don’t carry guns or handcuffs and may not restrain assailants until police arrive.

Effective solutions

Edmonton, AB, may be having the most success in curbing transit terrorism. Two years ago, after the horrific pummeling of driver Tom Bregg, S69, the city adopted a zero-tolerance policy with regard to transit violence. Edmonton subsequently put 60 “peace officers” (with batons and pepper spray) on their buses and those officers communicate with bus drivers several times during each shift.

The result? The number of incidents dropped from 61 to 41 last year, and there’ve been just nine so far in 2012.

Why has Edmonton been successful while other cities are still struggling?

Ron Gabruck, a retired police officer who heads Edmonton transit’s operational support, puts it this way: “It’s going to cost money to secure [a] system. To think otherwise, in my experience, is really wrong.”

And, right now, money is the one thing U.S. and Canadian transit systems don’t have.

But, Gabruck poses a question that all governments in North America should be asking as well: “What value do you place on having operators and patrons safe?”

Photo: Ryan M Stodie / www.ryanmacle.com
Halifax wants Nova Scotia to help pay for transit

Halifax is hurting. The cost of running Metro Transit is ballooning, as is the cost of maintaining the city’s overall infrastructure. And so, the Halifax Regional Council is asking Nova Scotia to help out with transit costs.

Currently, 70 percent of Metro’s $100 million budget comes from property taxes, while fares from the city’s 50,000 daily riders provide the rest. But, that’s not enough any more. The province has provided operating grants in the past, but nothing that transit agencies can count on.

The council has asked the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities to persuade the provincial government to sign on to a province-wide strategy that would include a regular, reliable annual operating fund. Right now, Metro Transit can only expand service by increasing property taxes and fares, or cutting service in one area to pay for it in another.

Editor’s Note: ATU urges locals to form coalitions with riders to change the political debate everywhere about transit funding and the need to get people to ride transit.

Ontario gives Guelph Transit $2.82 M from provincial gas tax

Guelph MPP Liz Sandals presented a cheque for $2.82 million to Guelph Transit in June — the municipality’s annual share of the provincial gas tax.

Guelph Mayor Karen Farbridge says because the funding is regular and predictable it helps Guelph Transit to do some long-term planning.

The tax — about 14 cents for every litre of gas bought in Ontario — goes to the province and between two and three cents per litre of that is given to municipalities with transit systems according to a formula, which evaluates ridership and population.

“We want to get people off the road and onto public transit,” Sandals says. “And we know that while gas consumption has increased slightly since the program started, transit ridership has increased considerably.”

Pittsburgh group: Transit cuts could cost more than deficit

Pittsburgh has been devastated by cuts to mass transit leaving many who rely on public transportation with no way to get to and from work, school, church and the doctor. Now the transit authority, citing more financial distress, is planning in September to eliminate 46 of its remaining 102 routes (30 percent), ending service after 10 p.m. on all but 13 bus and rail routes.

State and city officials say the planned cuts to public transportation must be made to close a projected $64 million budget deficit in the 2012-13 budget.

Cuts will cost far more

However, the cuts could be far more devastating than officials are predicting according to the Pittsburgh Community Reinvestment Group. A study found the cuts will cost the public far more than the $60 million that is needed to avert them. The higher costs to transit riders who lose their service and increased congestion for all who drive could add up to between $328 million and $405 million.

The group estimates traffic congestion costs Pittsburgh residents $850 million annually, and forecasts a 41 percent increase in congestion after the transit cuts.

The estimate of the cost of transit cuts also does not include the possible loss of businesses and residents that might occur if the Port Authority goes ahead with the planned 35 percent service cut.

“We’ve just finally turned the corner in Pittsburgh in terms of attractiveness to the outside world,” said Chris Sandvig, the group’s regional policy director. “Something like these service cuts could send us back in the other direction.”

Tale of Two Transit Systems

Editor’s Note: ATU urges locals to form coalitions with riders to change the political debate everywhere about transit funding and the need to get people to ride transit.
Earlier this year at Goldman Sachs’ annual meeting, a shareholder asked CEO Lloyd Blankfein if the bank would renegotiate a contract with the city of Oakland, CA. The city was losing about $4 million per year on the deal. The shareholder described the situation as “an issue of morality;” but, Blankfein disagreed, “I think it’s an issue of shareholder assets.”

In 2008, the Federal Reserve lent trillions of taxpayer dollars to failing banks to prevent an economic disaster. Fast forward to 2012, when a city needed a bailout; Goldman Sachs couldn’t be bothered. Instead Oakland cut public services and laid-off workers.

Bid rigging
Almost every public agency issues bonds to finance capital projects such as building schools or buying buses. The agency will then pay the money back to bondholders, with interest, over a long period of time.

As it turns out, banks have been engaged in a massive bid rigging scheme to shave points off of the interest rates they offer to pay public agencies.

For example, in 2001, Port Authority of Allegheny County wanted to invest over $200 million of construction bond proceeds in a holding account. In collusion with other banks, GE Capital lowered its winning bid from 5.04% to 5.00%, costing the Port Authority over $80,000 per year in potential interest revenue.

Nationally, banks have managed to skim hundreds of millions (if not billions) of dollars from public agencies.

Toxic swaps
Another problem for public entities is the interest rate swap. A swap provides budget certainty to public agencies by setting a fixed interest payment on outstanding bonds. In return a bank pays a variable interest rate back to the agency. If all goes well, the agency should break even.

However, agencies are currently paying interest rates to banks that were fixed years ago as high as 5 or 6 percent, while the banks are paying current variable rates back to the agencies near 0 percent.

If agencies could renegotiate these deals with today’s interest rates, they could save millions of dollars, but the only way to terminate an interest rate swap is to pay massive fees to the bank. A sample of 13 transit systems loses over $500 million annually on these deals. The New York MTA alone loses about $114 million every year.

Libor manipulation
About $800 trillion of financial contracts and derivatives, including interest rate swaps, are directly tied to an international interest rate known as Libor – the “London interbank offered rate.” Libor measures the short-term borrowing costs of 16 of the world’s largest banks.

An average of these self-reported costs is used to determine interest payments across the globe. These banks are now accused of submitting false borrowing costs. More significantly, various plaintiffs, including the City of Baltimore, MD, have filed lawsuits alleging that the banks knowingly colluded to manipulate the Libor rate to their advantage. Other states are conducting investigations.

It’s up to us in November
This is the state of deregulation in the 21st century – Wall Street running roughshod over our city, state, and local governments.

In the face of outright theft by our biggest financial institutions, Republicans want less regulation, less oversight, and less accountability. But the banks have proven time and again that they are incapable of controlling their own behavior. So it’s up to us to elect candidates in our cities and states who will protect our public funds in the interest of all citizens.

Memphis bus riders unite around transit as civil rights issue

One of the goals of the ATU and transit coalitions is to unite riders and riders in a movement to sustain and improve service in Canada and the United States.

Memphis, TN is one place where that sort of coalition is thriving. Local 713-Memphis joined with riders to form the Memphis Bus Riders Union to “raise the level of service and dignity provided by the public transit system as well as ensuring greater accountability and public input over ... policies and practices.”

The Memphis riders echo a refrain being heard more and more these days: “Public transportation is a civil rights issue.”

That’s why the coalition seeks to re-draw the routes that Memphis buses still travel designed to carry domestic workers to and from the suburbs.

That’s why they want buses to take riders to the places where people work – which would be a change from the current situation in which only 26 percent of available jobs are reachable via public transportation in less than 90 minutes, and 80 percent of public transit users have no other form of transportation.

That’s why they want to improve a system with a ridership that is 89 percent African American in which 60 percent make less than $18,000 a year.

Local 713 fully backs the Memphis Bus Riders Union, and will continue to work with the group to bring quality public transportation to the people who need it the most.

Sarah Crocker, daughter of Dwight Crocker, 256- Sacramento, CA, has been awarded a $1,000 Union Plus scholarship.

A scholar, accomplished athlete and active volunteer, Sarah is pursuing a biology degree and looks forward to a career in medicine or education. The daughter of two union members (her mother belongs to National Nurses United), she wants to leave her options open for now but proclaims confidently, “I want to have a job where I feel my actions have an impact on the lives of others around me.”

Sarah is very well aware of the impact union pay and benefits have had on her life because, as she notes, “I owe my middle-class life to unions.”

Union Plus has awarded $150,000 in scholarships to 129 students representing 44 unions, including Crocker, in the 2012 Union Plus Scholarship Program. In this 20th anniversary year of the program, more than 5,600 applications were received from union members and families in all 50 states.


In Goldman we trust
How Wall Street takes the public to the bank.

In this 20th anniversary year of the Union Plus Scholarship Program, a sample of 13 transit systems loses over $500 million annually on these deals. The New York MTA alone loses about $114 million every year.
Company discovers it can’t fire probationary worker for joining ATU

May-June 1992 In Transit

A probationary employee may be discharged for any reason, or for no reason at all, right? As in many cases, the obvious “ain’t necessarily so.” Especially, when, as reported by Local 1549’s President Andres Negron-Rolden, the Union is able to prove that this new employee lost his valuable job for stating he wanted to join the Union.

When the grievant was first hired for his mechanic’s job in Austin, he was told that Texas was a “right-to-work” state and he was discouraged from joining the union. He soon learned what “right-to-work” meant, when he found himself being ordered to perform “mechanic ‘A’” and “B” work up to 75% of the time, while receiving mechanic “C” pay – nearly $2.50 per hour less than the “A” rate.

Within six weeks of his starting day, the grievant began to question his job assignments, and removes the anxiety suffered by seniors who must choose between food and medicine.”

The key section the court upheld is the law’s order to buy health insurance, or, if people refuse, to pay an extra tax, via the IRS, to cover the uninsured. The law does not flatly force people to buy insurance, Chief Justice John Roberts wrote for the court majority. But the practical effect of the law and the court’s decision, experts said, is given the choice between buying insurance or paying extra to the IRS, a majority will buy insurance.

Congressional Republicans have once again vowed to repeal the law that is destined to become a big issue in the coming national election campaign.

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Congressional Republicans have once again vowed to repeal the law that is destined to become a big issue in the coming national election campaign.
¡Listos para revolucionar el mundo del transporte!

A lo largo de mi vida sindical he reflexionado a menudo sobre los sacrificios realizados por las personas durante el siglo pasado para crear nuestro movimiento obrero. Nuestra generación ahora es testigo de nuestra verdadera lucha para salvar ese movimiento obrero. Pero para ganar, para reconstruir la clase media, tenemos que hacer algo más que presenciarlo.

Y los estoy invitando a hacer justamente eso el domingo 30 de septiembre a las 7:00 EDT. Será entonces cuando todos los miembros de ATU puedan unirse a mí y a los líderes locales de todo Norteamérica para planificar cómo vamos a ganar las elecciones de noviembre de EE.UU, por nuestras familias y nuestros usuarios.

Tenemos que comprometernos, tenemos que salir de nuestra “zona de comodidad” y trabajar durante las próximas 10 semanas antes de la elección general.

La injusticia nos rodea. Todos conocemos a personas que han perdido sus empleos o no pueden conseguir uno. Muchos de nosotros tenemos hijos, ya adentrados en sus 20, aún en casa y sin trabajo.

Tenemos socialismo para los ricos, y un capitalismo violento y desenfrenado para los pobres. Tenemos un congreso congelado, que se niega a actuar en programas sensibles como expandir el sistema de transporte masivo.

Pero el poder de cambio está en nuestras manos. No han escuchado lo suficiente de nosotros o de nuestras víctimas, los usuarios del transporte.

Tengan fe en sí mismos

No les voy a pedir que tengan fe en un político o partido político. Les pido que tengan fe en sí mismos, en sus familias, en su familia sindical y en su comunidad. Podemos estructurar el poder pero toma trabajo.

El programa ATU es para crear alianzas con nuestros usuarios. Este año, con unas elecciones presidenciales en los Estados Unidos, la atención debe centrarse en fomentar el voto de nuestros amigos, nuestros familiares y si, de nuestros pasajeros.

El sindicato local actualmente se está perfilando. En esta revista y en nuestro sitio web verá a miembros de ATU en todo el país diciendo: “¡Sí, voy a participar!”

Es por ello que necesitamos que todos y cada uno de los miembros voten. Comprométanse ante sus hermanos y hermanas que dentro de cinco semanas a partir del 1 de octubre usted participará para lograr que su comunidad VOTE.

Inscripción

 Esto significa asegurarse de que puedan votar preguntándoles abiertamente. Y, todos los miembros de su familia, está inscritos para votar. Esto significa trabajar con sus funcionarios locales para crear una campaña en su ciudad y en sus paradas de autobuses.

Nuestros usuarios y nuestro miembros tienen los mismos intereses, pero generalmente no lo ven de este modo. En muchas ciudades, las agencias de transporte nos han separado de nuestros pasajeros. En las principales ciudades se están adelantando campañas por parte de los funcionarios electos en las que le piden a los usuarios unirse para recortar nuestros salarios, o de lo contrario se verán afectados por una reducción en el servicio y el aumento de las tarifas.

Podemos terminar esto diciéndoles a nuestros usuarios la verdad y ampliándoles su poder preparándolos para votar.

Así que marque en su calendario el domingo 30 de septiembre. ¡Unase a los miembros de UTA de toda Norteamérica en un gran evento de UTA a través de Internet para divulgar nuestro plan y preparar a ATU para que revolucione al mundo del transporte!

Las sindicaturas – tan necesarios como siempre lo han sido

¿Han escuchado alguna vez a alguien decir que los sindicatos ya no son necesarios?

Hace poco lei dos artículos que refutan ese argumento. El primero era acerca de una subvención de $30 millones que el gobierno federal le otorgará a los sistemas de
autobuses de Detroit para comprar y reparar autobuses y realizar otras mejoras.

Actualmente, se han hecho tantos recortes al sistema de tránsito de Detroit que algunos se han preguntado si podrán seguir operando. Sin embargo, el Congreso prefiere comprar nuevos autobuses relucientes para ciudades como Detroit en cambio de darles lo que realmente necesitan, dinero para administrar sus propios sistemas de transporte.

Entonces me di cuenta que la situación curiosamente se asemeja a algunas de las condiciones que derivó en la creación de nuestro Sindicato.

En 1892, los caballos que tiraban de los carruajes trabajaban turnos de sólo cuatro horas mientras que un operario podía verse forzado a trabajar 16 horas al día o más. Cuando se le preguntó por qué, uno de los propietarios de una empresa de transporte respondió, “los caballos cuestan dinero!”

Como ven, los caballos eran inversiones costosas, pero la mano de obra era barata.

Los caballos ya no se usan para el transporte masivo, pero al igual que con los caballos en 1892, el verdadero dinero hoy en día se invierte en las cosas que los conductores manejan, y no en los propios conductores. ¿Qué hay acerca de esas largas horas? En ese sentido, otra historia describía un nuevo informe sobre el sistema Metro de Washington DC que reveló que a pesar de que el Metro ha establecido un límite de no más de 16 horas de trabajo diarias para los operadores, ¡hay algunos que llegan a trabajar hasta 20 horas diarias! Como era de esperar, el informe desató las inquietudes acerca de la seguridad asociada a la fatiga de los operarios que trabajan durante tanto tiempo sin un descanso.

Me parece escuchar a los críticos vociferando sus objeciones: “¿Cómo puede ser que los grandes empresarios no hagan nada para mejorar las condiciones laborales?” Sin embargo, en pocas palabras, los grandes donantes republicanos quieren despedirlos y reemplazarlos con un trabajador no sindicalizado a quien se le pagará mucho menos.

En realidad, el verdadero dinero se invierte en los que no necesitan, dinero para administrar sus propios sistemas de transporte y en otros sectores.

Además, agregue que un voto por Mitt Romney o cualquier otro candidato anti sindicalista es un voto para reducir sus propios salarios, beneficios y condiciones laborales. Háganlo lo que sea necesario para garantizar que ninguno de nosotros tenga que experimentar la verdad de esa afirmación.

En solidaridad,
Bob Baker

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**No deje que los grandes peces gordos de GOP lo despidan**

Bien, ¡éste directo al grano y les diré de la manera más simple posible porqué deben votar por el Presidente Obama!

En pocas palabras, los grandes donantes republicanos quieren despedirlos y reemplazarlos con un trabajador no sindicalizado a quién se le pagará mucho menos. Gracias a la decisión de Ciudadanos Unidos de la Corte Suprema, estos peces gordos de GOP podrán aportar más dinero a la campaña de Mitt Romney del que se ha aportado anteriormente, y si es el caso, hará lo que ellos deseen.

No se trata de una táctica para crear pánico, es simplemente la verdad. Las mismas personas que están detrás de la campaña para coaltar a los sindicatos de obreros también están aportando a Mitt Romney, y quieren reemplazarlos a ustedes por personas con salarios inferiores, no sindicalizadas.

Su voto por Barack Obama puede evitar que eso suceda, y en una carrera tan reñida como esta, su voto será más importante que nunca.

Pero además, recuerde que sea un faro de la verdad en contra del aluvión de mentiras que inundaran las ondas radiales antes de las elecciones.

Nuevamente, gracias a la decisión de Ciudadanos Unidos, las corporaciones y los sindicatos pueden aportar a las campañas tanto como deseen. Pero, dado que en el pasado las grandes empresas han aportado 10 veces más que los sindicatos, espero que veamos muchas más propagandas “anti” y “pro” Obama en esta campaña.

Capítulos no escandalosos con el fin de apelar a los temores y prejuicios de los votantes, como sucedió hace cuatro años. Dirán que el presidente no nació en Estados Unidos, que es musulmán y que nos quitará nuestras armas. Dirán casi que cualquier cosa que crean que nos atemorizará independientemente de la verdad.

Insinuarán que el presidente es alguien que no es como nosotros, que nos dejará indefensos contra sus planes de destruir nuestro modo de vida. Francamente, en conjunto, estas invenciones instan a los peores elementos de nuestra sociedad, y son todas falsas.

Estas y otras mentiras insidiosas se repetirán con tanta frecuencia que muchas personas simplemente las considerarán como una verdad, sin embargo, cuento con que ustedes no sean una de ellas. Considere las cosas que ven en los medios, y desconfíe especialmente de los rumores difundidos a través de Internet o correo electrónico. Los sitios objetivos como FactCheck.org pueden ayudarles a hacerlo. Estoy seguro de que si ustedes saben la verdad, votarán por el Presidente Obama y por favor, voten. Sí que ya han escuchado todo esto con anterioridad, pero estas elecciones son verdaderamente importantes para el futuro del transporte y para los trabajadores del transporte de Norteamérica.

No se despierte la mañana después de las elecciones lamentando haber dejado que otras personas decidieran su destino.

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**TransitWeb**

Helping ATU Locals Harness the Power of the Internet for FREE

ATU is launching a new service, TransitWeb, to set up a free state-of-the-art website for local unions. This new innovative program includes:

- **EASE OF USE** User-friendly rich features, varied design template options, and ease of use for updates and changes.
- **FRESH CONTENT** Easily update your website with fresh content, photos and even videos.
- **SUPPORT** Free training to learn how to easily update and maintain your website.
- **NO COST** TransitWeb is a FREE program for all local unions, the full cost is covered by ATU International.
- **FLEXIBILITY** TransitWeb has been developed for ATU local unions. We’ll help you make your website fit your needs.

To get your website up and running today contact: communications@atu.org.
Death Benefits Awarded May 1, 2012 - June 30, 2012

In Memoriam

HERBERT W PETERSON
ILDEBRANDO PEREZ
MC KINLEY PALMER
GOLDMON MIX
HOLLIS D MEDFORD
LUTHER MC GEE
JOHNNY MARTIN
DOROTHY M KEMP
LATIMORE J GRAVES JR
MARY K GARRETT
DAVID A EVANS
RONNIE WILLIAMS
JOSEPH WILLIAMS
JAMES L PROVOST
ENNO PUNAB
LUIGI PALERMO
KARL E PAGE
MANUEL D PACHECO
WILLIAM G NICKLEE
LOLA NICHOLSON
ROBERT MC ILROY
MANUEL MACHADO
JOHN WILLIAM HOOD
EDWIN F J HICKEY
WAYNE HAYES
PAUL GAUCI
LESLIE FAKES
WALTER F BURGENER
JAMES THOMAS BARNES
ARTHUR EARL ROBINSON
HILDA LEWIS
DOUGLAS A CUMMINS
JOHN A BARUFALDI
THOMASINA H ASKEW
EUGENE N REESE
GEORGE HARRIS JR
26- DETROIT, MI
WILLIAM M JOHNSON
22- WORCESTER, MA
THOMAS A MATTSON
LANFORD LEE KERR
G H FOOTE
ROBERT EARL COLE
WILLIAM K BYRD
1- MEMBERS AT LARGE
July/August 2012
Hey, can you contribute to ATU COPE for transit. It'll cost no more than a cup of coffee per week!

Here's my COPE check off card.

Thanks, COPE donations make a difference!

Wow, I didn't think such a small amount could make such a big difference!

ATU Victory in transit vote.