



# Amalgamated Transit Union

10000 New Hampshire Avenue, Silver Spring, MD 20903  
301-431-7100 Fax 301-431-7117

Office of the International President

April 13, 2020

Dear ATU Employer/Transit Agency,

On behalf of the more than 200,000 members of the Amalgamated Transit Union who are putting their lives and livelihoods at risk to help their communities and the country survive the COVID-19 pandemic, **I am requesting that you take all actions necessary to implement the safeguards listed below to protect your workers, riders, and community.**

To date, more than 400 ATU members have tested positive for coronavirus, many are hospitalized, hundreds are quarantined, at least 18 have passed away, and thousands more are without a paycheck.

At more than 600 properties in 44 U.S. states and seven Canadian provinces where ATU members work, these frontline workers—bus, rail, and paratransit operators, mechanics and technicians, cleaners and support staff—**are demanding proper protective equipment (PPE), social distancing practices, testing procedures, and humane leave policies.** Thousands of transit workers, especially our school bus members, are furloughed or laid off and filing for unemployment for the first time in their lives.

**ATU partnered with agencies and employers** to help ensure that the CARES Act included \$25 billion in funding for the transit sector.

**We fought to ensure maximum flexibility** so that employers could keep core service operating for essential workers, obtain the resources necessary to acquire and distribute PPE to every employee and implement policies to protect both employees and riders alike.

**Unfortunately,** far too many employers are delivering half-measures, inadequate protections and refusing to utilize the available funds to compensate employees most affected by the layoffs and service cuts.

**More than a third of our Local Unions** report outright hostility from their public and private sector employers, and more than half of our Local Unions report that their employers have failed to implement critical changes needed to keep people safe, even as a second wave of this deadly virus sweeps across the continent.

**We understand that it's vital for essential-trip transit service to continue during this crisis. We are proud to carry emergency service, healthcare, grocery, and retail workers, and those who need care. But, as ATU International President, I cannot in good conscience encourage my members to go into the line of fire without the armor and provisions they need.**

**Today I am calling on you and every one of the employers whose workers we represent to immediately take the following actions. Anything less will fall short of our members right to work free from danger, imminent hazards and the specter of infection, from which they may not survive. The law and our moral obligations to protect human life requires no less.**

**We therefore demand that you implement the following Safe Service policies:**

1. Provision of all recommended personal protective equipment to every worker, including gloves, masks, sanitizers, and all PPE needed.
2. Pandemic leave for anyone showing symptoms of COVID-19, exposed to them, or with family or childcare obligations resulting from shutdowns.
3. Compensating workers classified as essential workers during a public health crisis at least 1.5 times their normal wage.
4. Rear door entry and fare elimination to support social distancing.
5. Retention of employees and maintenance of wages and benefits during service curtailment.
6. Strategic continuation of service to avoid overcrowding.
7. Limitations on bus passenger loads to no more than 10 and paratransit to no more than 1.
8. Limiting service access to essential workers and those seeking care.
9. Requiring passengers to wear masks to board a transit vehicle.
10. Provision of fully-paid, on-site testing of transit workers for COVID-19 symptoms.

Any agency or employer not adequately addressing each of these issues is putting our members, their families, our riders, and our communities at risk.

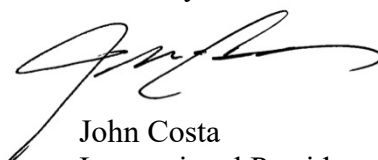
In the days ahead, we will be launching a mass education campaign to ensure our members know their right to refuse to work when confronted with an imminent hazardous safety or security condition, as protected under the National Transit Systems Security Act, the Surface Transportation Assistance Act of 1982, the federal Occupational Safety and Health Act, and National Labor Relations Act.

**ATU has no interest in disrupting critical transit service, but we will defend any ATU member who exercises their rights when confronting an imminent workplace danger.**

I urge you in the strongest terms to work with your ATU Local Union leadership to implement these life-saving protections and policies.

The money is there. The time for excuses is over. The time for action is now.

Sincerely,



John Costa  
International President