



Transport Workers Union of America, AFL-CIO

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May 8, 2019

Dear Representative:

On behalf of more than 150,000 members of the Transport Workers Union (TWU), I am writing to urge you to support the *Transit Worker and Pedestrian Protection Act* (H.R. 1139). When enacted, this bill will prevent violence against transit workers, protect commuters, and save lives.

Bus operators and other transit workers across the country are currently exposed to brutal assaults during the course of their work day. So far this year, workers in New York, Houston, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Columbus, Fargo, and other localities have been stabbed, beaten, spat on, and had urine thrown on them while operating large commercial passenger vehicles. These incidents not only impose significant physical and emotional damage to our members, but also put the traveling public at risk. Commuters and other road users rely on transit workers to safely operate buses and trains through congested, often unpredictable environments – a task that is impossible to accomplish if operators must simultaneously defend themselves.

Assaults on our workers are all too common; however, there are many known, effective solutions to protect operators and the travelling public. De-escalation training, barriers, and other tactics have a demonstrated record of success at significantly reducing the number of assaults on transit workers. H.R. 1139 would instruct transit agencies and their workers to use these tools to combat the scourge of operator assault in order to safeguard all the users of our public roads and sidewalks. The bill requires agencies to create and implement safety management plans, unique to each jurisdiction, to address the threats most prevalent in their communities. The bill would also authorize \$25 million each year to help local transit agencies put these plans into action.

In addition to protecting operators against assault, the bill would also help make our roads safer for pedestrians, cyclists, and others by adding proven collision avoidance technology to our buses. Many common sense innovations, such as blind-spot mirrors, which allow operators to view the entirety of their surroundings before changing lanes or turning, are long overdue for widespread adoption.

Taken together, these policy changes will improve the quality of transit service delivery across our country and save lives. The TWU urges you to cosponsor H.R. 1139 by contacting Joe Sheehy (Joe.Sheehy@mail.house.gov) in Representative

Grace Napolitano's office. Please feel free to reach out to Zack Tatz (ZTatz@twu.org) at 202-719-3881 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

John Samuelson
International President
Transport Workers Union