



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 27, 2020

Contact: Travis Reuther, treuther@twu.org

The TWU Applauds House Passage of Coronavirus Legislation

CARES Act protects frontline workforce, reimburses transit agencies, and expands unemployment assistance to affected workers

Washington, D.C. – The Transport Workers Union of America, AFL-CIO (TWU) applauds the passage of the bipartisan *Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act* (H.R. 748) today by the House of Representatives, and strongly urges the President to sign the bill into law as quickly as possible.

The CARES Act helps stabilize the transportation sector and delivers immediate aid to frontline workers who need it. Among our priorities included in the bill are:

- \$58 billion in direct federal aid to airlines (\$33 billion in grants and \$25 billion in loans) and airline contractors with appropriate conditions to ensure that all funds go directly to support the frontline workforce and are not used to undermine the collective bargaining process.
- No reductions in pay rates or benefits or involuntary furloughs through September 30, 2020 at airlines that accept federal grants.
- \$25 billion reimbursement for transit systems with increased costs and lost revenue during the pandemic. The federal share of the grant money is 100%, which means the agencies do not contribute matching funds.
- \$1 billion in additional support for Amtrak workers who are not eligible for state-based unemployment insurance. Prevents Amtrak from permanently discontinuing any routes or customer services.
- A broad unemployment insurance and assistance program for all workers who are unemployed due to the pandemic.

As the coronavirus pandemic continues to spread, ninety-five percent of TWU members have been classified as “essential employees.” While much of the country has been asked to stay at home, TWU transit, airline, railroad, and utility workers have continued transporting medical professionals to hospitals, driving food to those in need, delivering personal protective equipment to those who need it, sanitizing and disinfecting transportation systems, and returning Americans home from abroad.

Nationwide, more than one hundred TWU members have confirmed cases of COVID-19. Yesterday, two New York City transit workers and members of TWU Local 100 tragically lost their lives to the virus.

“This legislation is both urgent and necessary. I want to thank Speaker Pelosi for her leadership on behalf of workers in this process,” said Transport Workers Union President John Samuelsen. “I also want to thank Chairman Peter DeFazio, Chairwoman Nita Lowey, Chairman Richie Neal, Chairman Bobby Scott, Chairman David Price, and Chairwoman Rosa DeLauro, for making sure the details of this bill benefit transportation workers in every sector.

“Transport workers deserve everything in this bill and more,” continued Samuelsen. “Our members are literally putting their lives on the line and risking the health of their families to fight back against the pandemic. We cannot continue to have a system that fails to adequately protect our frontline workers. This bill is a very important first step toward making sure TWU members and working families feel supported, financially secure, and safe on the job. We will continue working with Congress to ensure our members get the proper help they need to fight this virus.”

###

The Transport Workers Union of America, AFL-CIO, represents more than 151,000 workers in the airline, railroad, transit, universities, utilities and services sectors.