



## **AMALGAMATED TRANSIT UNION DIVISION 726**

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### **Via Email & First Class Mail**

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I write to express my growing anger and frustration at the MTA's treatment of the members of ATU 726, as well as that of our other ATU brothers and sisters employed by the MTA who are still working without a contract.

As you know, the bus operators and maintenance employees represented by ATU 726 have sacrificed tremendously since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Scores of our members have been sickened by the coronavirus, several 726 members have died or lost family members, and hundreds more have struggled to balance the complications of school closures and remote learning with their work responsibilities for New York City Transit. This past year has been challenging for everyone, and ATU 726 members are no exception.

The work of a bus operator is hard on any average day – handling passengers, navigating through pedestrians and traffic, driving in inclement weather, making scheduled time points, and driving for hours to provide the best and safest public transportation possible. But COVID made work even more difficult. Showing up to transport our fellow New Yorkers, essential workers, and healthcare heroes, our members also had to handle the challenges of customer compliance with mask mandates to keep everyone safe from the virus while riding public transit, as well as perform their already difficult work while wearing a mask themselves. Our maintainers also spent day after day cleaning and sterilizing buses and depots, racing to meet the regular 24 hour deadlines in order to keep the public and NYCT employees safe and healthy.

But these sacrifices have been met with a slap in the face from the MTA. We have not received a raise in over 3 years, since February 2018. Meanwhile, our colleagues in TWU Local 100, whose wages have set the pattern for those of us in ATU 726 for over 75 years, are doing the same work as we are, but getting paid nearly 7% more.

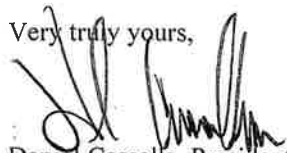
It has now been a year since the MTA told us they were cancelling negotiations because of financial uncertainty. Except now, the federal funding the MTA had desperately sought has come through. Yet the bus operators and maintainers in ATU 726 are still without wage increases. Even now, after this tremendously difficult year.

NYC Transit asked us, the Unions, for help in securing Federal Funds for the Transit System. Transit asked all the ATU Locals and TWU Locals to lobby Senator Schumer. Which we did, with many letters and Zoom calls to the Senator. After securing the much-needed Federal funding NYC Transit has awarded there employes no contract negotiations and told by NYC Transit to file for Binding Arbitration. We thank all the Unions and Members, and especially Senator Schumer for fighting and securing Federal Financial Dollar's for the NYC Transit system.

To add insult to injury, the MTA's lawyers have said the agency is insisting that we go through an impasse arbitration just to get the same pattern as TWU Local 100 – a pattern we have had for over 75 years. Worse still, although the last impasse proceeding was conducted jointly with ATU 1056, the MTA this time has insisted we conduct separate, individual proceedings, adding further cost and delay to taxpayers and our members.

History will be your judge. It is past time to rectify this terrible treatment of your workforce who serve the riding public. You must do the right thing and give my members what they deserve, a contract.

Very truly yours,



Daniel Cassella, President  
ATU Local 726