



NEWS RELEASE

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Congress Will Vote on Giving Transit Agencies Flexibility to Use Stimulus Funds for Operating Expenses in Supplemental Bill

WASHINGTON, DC – *Edward Wytkind, President of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO, issued the following statement today upon House and Senate consideration of the FY 2009 Supplemental Appropriations Act:*

“Demand for mass transit service is increasing like never before. Yet the struggling economy has created huge shortfalls in state and local contributions to transit agencies. From New York to Nashville, St. Louis to Charlotte, transit agencies are cutting employees, reducing service and increasing fares.

“Unfortunately, new buses aren’t going to expand capacity if there are no employees to drive them. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act initially offered funds only for capital projects. We fought for a change included in the final supplemental bill that offers transit agencies flexibility to use some stimulus funds for operating cost shortfalls.

“This will deliver on the promise of the economic stimulus legislation by not only creating new jobs but also preserving jobs. And not just for transit workers – in every corner of the country, Americans rely on public transportation to get to work.

“This is good governance at its best: Congress saw an opportunity to make the stimulus funding more relevant and created a legislative fix. And while it may not be a panacea, it is an important first step to make funds available where they are desperately needed.”

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The Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO, represents 32 member unions in the aviation, rail, transit, trucking, highway, longshore, maritime and related industries. For more information, visit www.ttd.org.

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