



A bold voice for transportation workers

September 21, 2018

Cosponsor S. 3215 - the Bus Operator and Pedestrian Protection Act

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD), I urge you to cosponsor **S.3215, the Bus Operator and Pedestrian Protection Act**. This common-sense legislation will help address the growing epidemic of assaults committed against transit bus drivers, enhance pedestrian safety and facilitate needed improvements to the bus operator work station.

TTD and our affiliated unions [recently reaffirmed](#) our support for federal action to better protect drivers who are simply attempting to do their jobs and provide for their families. Unfortunately, stories like [this one](#), where a bus driver had urine thrown on her; [these accounts](#) of bus drivers being hit, spit on, and pelted with objects by passengers; and [this tragic story](#) of a driver who was shot and killed by a gunman have become all too common in cities and towns across the nation.

What's more, [attacks like these](#) not only put the bus drivers at risk, but also endangers passengers and other road users. And, as [this driver](#) points out, they can cause psychological trauma for years to come.

To help stem the growing tide of these truly heinous attacks, Senator Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) recently introduced **S.3215, the Bus Operator and Pedestrian Protection Act**. This bill will require transit agencies, in cooperation with front-line employees, to develop a risk reduction plan using a data-driven analysis of an agency's bus operations. Based on the results of this analysis and the existence of current safety programs, agencies will be required to deploy strategies to reduce assaults, including the utilization of driver shields and de-escalation training.

We know the mitigation steps provided for in this bill work. Retrofitted partitions on New York City buses – though not a perfect solution – have already led to a [reduction in driver assaults](#). And in Los Angeles, barriers and de-escalation training [have shown significant promise](#) in reducing the number of assaults on LA Metro bus operators.

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Larry I. Willis, President / Greg Regan, Secretary-Treasurer



The bill also requires similar risk reduction analyses to be conducted on visual obstructions that create blind spots and the ergonomic design of the operator workstation. Too many road users are put in harm's way at no fault of the driver because of poor and outdated bus design. It is time that we redesign the operator workstation and implement driver assist technologies with the health of the operator and wellbeing of all road users in mind, and this bill would provide for those improvements.

I urge you to support this important legislation and to enhance the safety of bus drivers, passengers and those that share the streets with these transit vehicles. To cosponsor S.3215, please contact Deborah Haynie in Senator Van Hollen's office at 202-224-4654 or Deborah_Haynie@vanhollen.senate.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Larry Willis".

Larry I. Willis
President