

TTD NEWS RELEASE

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FTA Fails to Protect Transit Workers from Violent Assaults

Washington DC – Larry Willis, president of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD), issues this statement in response to today’s notice from the Federal Transit Administration, abdicating their statutory responsibility to stop assaults against transit workers:

“America’s public transportation workforce is in the midst of a national crisis. Thousands of bus operators and other transit employees will become victims of brutal attacks by passengers every single year. Some are slapped, punched, or have objects thrown at them. Others will tragically have their lives taken from them, like Thomas Dunn, who was murdered by a passenger while driving a bus in Tampa just last week. These senseless and vicious attacks are made against men and women who, just like you and me, are simply trying to do their jobs.

“Recognizing the need for action, bipartisan language was included in the 2015 FAST Act surface transportation law requiring that the Federal Transit Administration issue a rule protecting transit operators from the risk of assault. What the FTA revealed today, more than four years after the passage of the law, was instead a gentle suggestion that transit agencies take a look at the problem if they feel so inclined.

“Rather than requiring real mitigation strategies that may include the increased use of driver shields or de-escalation training to mitigate these assaults, the FTA has given wide latitude to transit agencies to keep doing more of the same. In most cases, more of the same means doing nothing to keep our workforce out of harm’s way.

To put a stop to this crisis once and for all, additional action by Congress will clearly be required. Fortunately, pending bi-partisan legislation, the Transit Worker and Pedestrian Protection Act (H.R. 1139/S. 436) would require transit agencies to implement strategies – tailored to meet the needs of each agency – that have been proven to improve the safety of drivers. We call on Congress to pass this common sense bill to ensure transit workers have the protections they so desperately need and deserve.”

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The Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD), provides a bold voice for workers in every mode of transportation and is devoted to protecting middle-class jobs, expanding collective bargaining and ensuring modern, safe and secure transportation operations and infrastructure. For more information visit us at www.ttd.org.

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