



A bold voice for transportation workers

April 28, 2020

Give Frontline Essential Workers the Federal Support They Deserve
Cosponsor H.R. 6559, the COVID-19 Every Worker Protection Act

Dear Representative:

Every year on April 28th, we pause to commemorate Worker's Memorial Day and to remember and honor those who have been killed or seriously injured on the job. This day has particular poignancy this year, as millions of essential workers put themselves in harm's way and continue to do their jobs in order to help in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. That is why, on behalf of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD), and our 33 affiliated unions, I urge you to cosponsor H.R. 6559, the COVID-19 Every Worker Protection Act of 2020, which would require the Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) to promulgate an emergency temporary standard (ETS) to protect workers from exposure to the coronavirus.

All across our country, millions of transportation workers are among those who have been bravely doing their part to see our country through this disaster. They have driven the buses and trains that bring health care workers and patients alike to medical facilities. They have kept our skies open and operating in order to deliver goods and supplies quickly across the country. They have kept our supply chain running, crewing, loading and unloading commercial ships, and operating and maintaining the freight rail network that connects communities from coast to coast. They have helped keep our federal, state, and local governments operating and serving the public good. In fact, if you look at the [guidance issued](#) by the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), every single union in the TTD family represents essential workers who go to work every day knowing they are putting themselves and their families at risk in order to serve the public good.

Unfortunately, these workers are being let down by their federal government. There is no basic regulatory framework that comprehensively addresses an employer's responsibility to protect their employees from infectious disease. As a result, measures that have been proven to save lives, including full deployment of personal protective equipment (PPE), adequate cleaning and disinfecting protocols, and policies to ensure social distancing in the workplace have not been universally mandated or implemented. Instead, employees have been left with vague unenforceable guidelines that do not address sector specific or vocation specific risks and protective needs. An ETS is a vital and necessary step that the federal government can and must take to help protect workers and their families from occupational exposure to COVID-19.

Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO
815 16th Street NW / 4th Floor / Washington DC 20006
Tel: 202.628.9262 / Fax: 202.628.0391 / www.ttd.org
Larry I. Willis, President / Greg Regan, Secretary-Treasurer



OSHA could act on its own and issue an ETS today, but so far they have refused to take action. Unfortunately, the administration's recalcitrance – even as the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in the U.S. has soared past 1 million and the deaths approach 60,000 – has made Congressional action necessary. Not only will H.R. 6559 help protect essential workers right now, it will prove vital as our country begins to reopen. Even a modest expansion of economic activity and increased social interactions will add passengers and density to a transportation system that cannot protect workers under current limited demand. We can only do this safely if enhanced protective measures are in place.

The frontline workers that TTD unions represent are proud to do their part to see our country through this public health and economic crisis. But it is simply unacceptable that they continue to do so without the federal protections that they need to stay safe on the job. As a country we cannot confront this pandemic with half-measures and voluntary, vague guidance that fails to reflect the seriousness of the situation. I urge you to cosponsor H.R. 6559 and pass it into law. Our nation's essential workers deserve nothing less.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Larry I. Willis". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Larry I. Willis
President