



Amalgamated Transit Union

10000 New Hampshire Avenue, Silver Spring, MD 20903
301-431-7100 Fax 301-431-7117

Office of the International President

May 5, 2020

The Honorable Bill de Blasio
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Dear Mayor de Blasio:

On behalf of more than 10,000 members of the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) and their families who are about to lose their income and medical benefits, I am pleading with you to renew the City's contracts with school bus contractors immediately.

As you know, City officials were supposed to vote last week on whether to approve \$200 million in emergency payments to the private companies that operate the City's school bus system, but the contract renewals were never voted on. As a result, school bus companies sent letters to 10,000 members of ATU Local 1181, alerting them they will be furloughed. It does not have to be this way, and you have the power to stop it.

Since March, New York City has experienced unspeakable heartbreak and pain. Death is everywhere. The City is reeling, and according to a new fiscal report, one in five working residents will lose their jobs by the end of June due to the coronavirus. This quarter will see a 22% unemployment rate with 900,000 jobless New Yorkers.

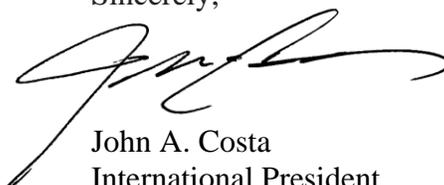
Why then, would the City purposely send 16,000 more workers to the unemployment line, putting thousands of black and brown families in harm's way? This is not consistent with your lifelong progressive record of fighting for working families. Just a few more weeks of employment will allow these workers to maintain their health insurance – which we need now more than ever before – through the summer months. While we of course understand the need for City agencies to comb through budgets for savings during this crisis, adding 16,000 workers to the already endless unemployment line makes no sense whatsoever.

Moreover, cutting off payments to the school bus contractors is not in the best interest of the schoolchildren we serve, as the companies have ongoing expenses while schools are closed. Restarting in September will not be as simple as flipping a switch.

While ATU's transit members in Brooklyn, Queens, and Staten Island are rightfully being called "heroes" during these horrific times, their brothers and sisters in the school bus industry are being cast away as "zeroes." We urge you to be a hero yourself by paying the contractors with the funds that were previously set aside for school transportation and keeping our members employed until the traditional summer break.

Thank you for your consideration of this urgent request.

Sincerely,



John A. Costa
International President

c: Michael Cordiello, PR/BA, ATU Local 1181, New York, NY