

For Immediate Release: Thursday, June 10, 2010

Contact: Corey Bearak (ATU 1056 Policy & Political Director) (718) 343-6779/ (516) 343-6207

## ATU Local 1056, Electeds & Community v. Bus Cuts

Amalgamated Transportation Union (ATU) Local No. 1056, its president I. Daneek Miller, elected officials including Queens Borough President Helen Marshall and representatives of Council Members James Sanders and Mark Weprin, ATU Local 1179 Vice President John Lyons, the Queens Civic Congress, Community Board 2Q Chair Joseph Conley, Community Board 6 District Manager Frank Gulluscio, Community Board 11 member Steve Behar, Queens civic leaders and concerned residents rallied today to urge the MTA to reverse harmful cuts and eliminations to Queens bus service outside Queens Borough Hall. "At a time when the agency continues to invest funds for Manhattan megaprojects that will make millions for monied interests, our coalition of community, labor and electeds urges the MTA to restore service on these Queens lines: Q14, Q15, Q24, Q26, Q30, Q31, Q42, Q48, Q74, Q75, Q76, Q79, Q89, QM22, QM23, and X51," stated I. Daneek Miller, president of ATU Local 1056 which represents drivers and mechanics who work for MTA New York City Transit's Queens bus division.

"The MTA and its chairman/CEO Jay Walder refuse to exercise other options that would avert these cuts," explained Mr. Miller. "Instead, they chose to balance their books on the backs of working people who depend on these bus lines each day. The issue is not money; it's policy. The public needs to know MTA chair Walder, once of Queens but late of London, testified to the NYS Assembly that he would NOT (emphasis added) apply new funding or saved resources to restore service cuts and eliminations. This is just an outrage. For many Queens residents, buses provide the ONLY transit option."

"Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 1056, which represents drivers and mechanics who work for MTA New York City Transit's Queens bus division, had made the case for funding, added Miller. "Legislators support the restorations. It remains a question of priorities. Senators Charles Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand sponsor legislation to direct federal operating aid, previously denied NYC transit, to the MTA. The City Council identified \$90 million in unused federal stimulus monies and some \$50 million in funds currently allocated to pay-as-you-go capital to avert the cuts. The public needs to weigh in and make clear its preference for bus service over massive projects that offer meager service to Queens – and nothing for decades!"

Miller declared, "We cannot let these harmful cuts stand at a time when MTA management takes care of folks at top, perpetuates wasteful policies and practices and advances costly megaprojects that benefit connected developers and other insiders. Tell the MTA NO! Local 1056 will continue to speak out and urges our elected and community leader allies to keep up the pressure against the cuts and for using stimulus funding to fund the operations shortfall."

"The bottom line is public transportation cannot be viewed as just a private sector, market driven service. It provides the economic and social hub of our society and the lifeline of all our citizens, and no reasonable person or entity can support these harmful service cuts. ATU Local 1056 will continue to rally, lobby and organize against the service cuts.

"If things do not change, the MTA stands poised to radically cut and eliminate bus service throughout Queens," concluded Miller. "Residents, whether riders or not, must united to oppose these misguided and harmful actions. As a first step contact your state legislator to press the Governor and the MTA. Second, call 3-1-1 and demand that the Mayor who found the time to tape a commercial to urge LeBron James to play here to prevail upon the MTA to restore these cuts. Add your voice. Make it heard."

Borough President Marshall's intended statement follows:

“Thank you everybody for coming out here today as we voice our opposition to the proposed service cuts to bus service in Queens. We must stand together and fight for the continuation of these vital bus routes. We simply cannot accept these service reductions!!”

“Bus service is the lifeline of our transportation system in Queens. At a time when we are all encouraging mass transit, we should all oppose the plan to eliminate and reduce service on numerous bus routes serving Queens.

“Thousands of passengers rely on these bus lines as their only means of transportation.

“ Instead of cutting services, the MTA should focus their attention on alternative methods to improve services.

“I understand the MTA is aced with a large budget gap. My office is also facing budget cuts. And service cuts are never an easy thing to implement.....but there has got to be a way to help ply the budget gap without cutting these services.

“We, as elected officials, need to work together with the mayor, and the city council as well as the state to balance the budget, rather than cut services. Just look down to the corner of Union Turnpike and you will see right there how important buses are to the residents of Queens.”

“The MTA expects Queens riders to pay the price for the Agency's inability to manage its budget, stated James Trent (Treasurer and Transportation Chair) on behalf of Patricia Dolan, president of Queens Civic Congress which represents more than 110 civic, condo, co-op, tenants and other community organizations in the borough. “The ridership needs to know why the MTA is spurning federal dollars that other transit agencies are using to save service in favor of laying off workers and ending critical service for the public.”

“The Q79 bus line is a vital transportation line that links portions of Northeast Queens to the rest of the borough and to Long Island ,” Senator Frank Padavan said in a submitted statement. “The elimination of Q79 will severely impact the daily lives of thousands of seniors, students and workers who use the line to traverse Queens. The bus is also important for local commerce and economic development. Elimination of the Q79 Bus is counterproductive and that is why the community has stood up in one voice to oppose this wrong-headed plan The bottom line is that the Q79 Bus is a necessity not a luxury. It’s time for the MTA to listen to the thousands Queens residents who oppose this plan and ensure the Q79 Bus remains in full operation.”



*Representing all hourly rated Employees of the  
Queens Division, Who safely Operate and  
Maintain Buses for MTA New York City Transit.*

***Serving the communities of Queens,  
Manhattan, and the Bronx since January 23rd,  
1935.***

Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1056  
One Cross Island Plaza, 133-33 Brookville Blvd., Room 112  
Rosedale, NY 11422-1491  
(718) 949-6444



Borough President Helen Marshall speaks after her introduction by ATU Local 1056 President I. Daneek Miller. At center behind Miller is ATU Local 1179 Vice President John Lyons. [Photo Courtesy of ATU Local 1056]



Borough President Helen Marshall speaks after her introduction by ATU Local 1056 President I. Daneek Miller. At center behind Miller is ATU Local 1179 Vice President John Lyons. Behind Marshall is Community Board 6 District Manager Frank Gulluscio. At the borough president's right is Councilman James Sanders' Chief of Staff, Donovan Richards, James Trent of the Queens Civic Congress and Community Board 11 member Steven Behar. [Photo Courtesy of ATU Local 1056]