

Monday, October 3, 2011

**New Yorkers WEAR RED**  
**to support federal funding for public transportation infrastructure.**  
**Don't X Out Public Transit**

To the editor:

Last month, Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local No. 1056, elected officials, including State Senator Toby Stavisky, Assembly Members Rory Lancman and Grace Meng, City Council Member Leroy Comrie, a representative of Assembly Member David Weprin and advocates came together to support federal funding for public transit and oppose cuts currently on the table in Washington. At our news conference in downtown Flushing, we asked members of the public to darn red clothing and contact federal lawmakers with a simple message:

***Don't Cross Out ("X") Out Public Transit***

Decisions in Washington can make or break our economy, particularly here in New York. The President's *American Jobs Act* includes \$50 billion to upgrade America's road, rails and airports. We need our Members of Congress and Senators to back this legislation that invests in the economy and grow jobs in America. This starts with an investment in public transportation infrastructure. And that makes any plans to cut rather than increase federal support for mass transit inopportune and BAD for business. We also called on the Governor Cuomo to stop raids on MTA dedicated tax funds by passing the Transit Funding Lockbox Bill (S4257/A6766). Local 1056 represents drivers and mechanics who work for MTA New York City Transit's Queens bus division. More information and an on-line petition may be found at <http://supporttransit.org/>.

The House leadership in our nation's capitol proposes to cut more than one-third of federal funding across the board for public transit and surface transportation programs. If implemented, transit riders can expect service delays, fare increases and over-crowding, and businesses can face a period of no growth.

The proposed federal transit cuts means increased unemployment and stranding many Americans without access to their jobs and basics such as grocery stores, medical and faith services.

Our nation's economy and to thrive, New York – especially the Greater New York region, **REQUIRES** a thriving, working integrated mass transit system that relies on bus, subway and commuter rail service. This means reforming the existing antiquated federal funding formula to allow large population urban areas (population 200,000 or more) to use monies for transit operations.



When dedicated transit funds get diverted to the general fund, New Yorkers lose. After New York State diverted \$143 million of dedicated transit funding to balance its budget last year, New Yorkers got stuck with the harshest service cuts in a generation. The MTA cut 37 bus routes, 570 bus stops and two subway lines.

Dedicated funds remain critical to public transit, particularly the operating budget. The Legislature approved certain taxes on the premise with the promise being the revenues would support mass

transit. Dedicated taxes make up a vital 37% of MTA operating revenue. These funds, explicitly created to support the MTA provide a stable and reliable funding source. Without them, the MTA may look cut services further, delay construction projects, and increase already scheduled fare hikes. This would affect the lives of millions of people and hurt the state's economy.

The MTA reduced and eliminated bus service throughout Queens last year. We need to reverse these harmful cuts. We need a commitment from the MTA that any additional Federal, State or City funding will support service (operations) restorations.

Investment in transit projects also supports the construction and manufacturing trades. The investment in solid, consistent, reliable transit service pays big dividends and any adherence to the short-sighted penny-pinchers will further setback the economy and slow if not derail our (economic recovery). A re-investment in operations makes certain our transit system moves people, workers and consumers, and students, to keep our urban centers dynamic.

Sincerely,

**I. Daneek Miller**  
**President/Business Agent**  
**ATU Local 1056**

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