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**ATU Local 1056 MEMBERS JOIN ATUers in OHIO
URGE RIDERS TO SUPPORT CANDIDATES WHO SUPPORT TRANSIT
LOCAL EFFORT KICKS OFF THIS WEEK**

“Congressional attempts to slash public transportation even as transit systems across the country raise fares and cut service make it imperative this election year for riders to voter to support candidates who support public transportation,” stated I. Daneek Miller, President and Business Agent for Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 1056.

Thus the ATU mobilized with 500 members including 200 from all over the United States visiting Ohio to support the re-election of President Barack Obama and Senate candidate Sharon Brown during the first weekend of October and several days that followed. Local 1056 President Miller led a contingent of Local 1056 activists to encourage Ohioans to participate in early voting allowed in that important swing state. The ATU activists also trained volunteers in Ohio to organize in support of candidates for local office and members of Congress. Miller noted a similar ATU effort took place simultaneously in Denver, Colorado.

The International ATU, the nation's largest labor organization for public transit workers, represented the effort as a strategy to rally support for public transportation and related issues and for those electeds that support public transit. The campaigns focus on mobilizing public transit riders to get registered and vote. ATU Local 1056 represents bus operators and mechanics who work for MTA New York City Transit's Queens bus division and serve the riding public here in Queens.

About 10,000 ATU member took part in this effort to register and turn out voters across the county. It also includes approaching riders and bus stops and rail and subway location while off-duty this month. “We want prospective voters to focus on halting the cutbacks in mass-transit funding – not just in Washington, and encouraged more investment in our nation's public transportation infrastructure,” stated Mr. Miller who also co-chairs the MTA Labor Coalition. “Our International President Larry Hanley often notes that for every one of our members we have 100 riders; that represents a powerful bloc of voters who can impact the outcome of this and other critical elections.”

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Many transit riders remain especially vulnerable to voter suppression; they lack a driver's license which remains the most common form of I.D. As a result ATU members will reach out at bus, subway and rail stops to reach out to these Americans and urge them to vote.

Public transit workers expect to drive greater voter turnout and help determine election outcomes as a result.

The ATU effort grew out of a determination to increase public transit friendly candidates and elected officials. The transportation budget put forth by the House Republican leadership sought to axe public transportation by 25%. National surveys indicate overwhelming public support for public transportation so arming the public with information about where candidates and incumbents stand on this vital issue remains critical. From the ATU's perspective, investing in public transit is a matter of national defense because it moving more people from cars to buses reduces our dependence on foreign oil. Public transit also plays a critical role in the economy, not just in the jobs it provides but in getting people to work. Unemployed people without cars lack any way to get to where jobs exist in areas without or which lost bus service.

In New York, the ATU plans to reach out to its members to participate in a series of rider actions in the weeks and days leading up to Election Day.

“Across the nation and in New York, ATU members and their allies make a point of rallying riders by thanking them for riding public transit,” advised Mr. Miller. “We remind riders that they ease traffic congestion on our roads, reduce gas consumption and dependence on foreign oil, keep our roads safe as riding a bus is 91 times safer than car travel, improve our air quality by reducing car pollution, save up to \$820 per month and \$10,000 per year in transportation costs, and stimulate out economy since every \$1 invested in public transportation generates \$4 in economic returns.”