

# **City Agrees to change how it applies Vision Zero law**

**by Mark Henry, President/ Business Agent, ATU Local 1056**

As President of ATU Local 1056 I share an important update concerning the City's vision zero law and a favorable settlement reached in federal court. As you know last summer The City Council and Mayor passed a law intended to charge drivers for RECKLESS and worse behavior on City streets. It included a requirement to arrest those reckless drivers when the incident included a pedestrian in a crosswalk. We were told the language of the law did not target the MTA's bus operators. The law included a clear exemption for those "engaged in work on behalf of the City, the state of New York...."

Despite that understanding of the law and the assurances of its prime sponsor, the NYPD made arrests, including one ATU Local 1056 member and two TWU Local 100 bus operators, following accidents involving pedestrians in a crosswalks. These tragic accidents involved no "criminal" reckless driving. As a result of their arrests all of the bus operators are facing TA discipline. Yesterday, the City agreed to no longer apply this dead wrong interpretation that treats our bus operators as criminals. ATU's strong support of corrective legislation, Int. No. 663, sponsored by Council Member I. Daneek Miller, helped move the City towards this settlement. We also thank our brothers and sisters at Local 100 which brought the lawsuit

Nevertheless ATU still urges all bus operators please proceed with cautions when making turns, especially at locations with a crosswalk. In a recent memo to Local 1056 bus operators, I advised due care beyond any expected nor provided by the MTA in its training of bus operators, recommending bus operators "presume the worst when approaching intersections. A pedestrian may still enter the street and attempt to cross – ATU urges bus operators to use their best judgment and caution at intersections and turns."

This settlement recognizes that MTA bus drivers remain the safest drivers on the road. MTA bus operators enjoy better accident safety records than other large systems including Boston, Chicago, New Jersey Transit, Southeastern Pennsylvania and Washington D.C. They fail to understand our worth in the community and this city especially when it came to the WTC Disaster, Super Storm Sandy and Irene.

Unlike other drivers, NYC Transit Bus Operators – true professionals – remain the safest drivers around; this includes ongoing supervision and training and drug-testing. Our unique operations help reduce traffic and the number of drivers on the road.

Congratulations to all for their efforts on behalf of this outcome.