

**Statement of Mark Henry, Chair, Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) NYS
Legislative Conference Board & President/Business Agent, ATU Local 1056
on Transit and Rail Worker Protection
February 12, 2020**

“ATU urges our State legislators to embrace and pass this protective legislation,” stated Mark Henry, chair of the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) NYS Legislative Conference Board and President/Business Agent of Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 1056 in Queens. “For too long our members who operate and maintain NYC Transit bus routes serving Queens with some routes extending into The Bronx, Brooklyn and Manhattan, and other bus and subway and rail workers endured the being a victim of kicking, shoving, spitting, threats or other abuse.”

“Under current law, for police officers to make an arrest or any other enforcement action, they need to witness some types of assault including spitting. We need a change in law to impose real consequences and deterrence.

“This explains ATU’s support for the Governor’s budget proposal; it includes an amendment to the penal code that elevates spitting on a transit worker from a violation – equivalent to a mere parking ticket – to misdemeanor aggravated harassment, punishable by up to one year in jail. The proposed reform would also apply to other forms of physical contact – a slap, a shove, or a kick, aggravated harassment.

“This bill also extends coverage to more transit workers who face threat of violence. Existing law makes it a felony to assault and cause physical injury to a transit worker, The propose change would add more job titles and work descriptions by broadening the group of covered workers to include maintenance workers, station customer assistants, anyone involved in fare media sales, inspections and other tasks.

“It remains very important that the riding public and the communities they serve and those who they depend on all make their voices heard and support these measures to protect those who serve them everyday.”

Supporting transit local and their presidents include Transport Workers Union (“TWU”) Local 100 (Tony Utano); ATU Union Local 726 (Danny Cassella); Association of Commuter Rail Employees (Metro-North) (General Chairman Edward Valente); TWU Local 106 Vincent Modafferri; ATU Local 1181 (Michael Cordiello); Mike Carrube, Subway Surface Supervisors Association; ATU Local 1179 (Jose DeJesus); and Sheet/Maritime/Air /Transportation Workers Association (LIRR) (General Chairman Anthony Simon).

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*Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1056
211-12 Union Turnpike
Hollis Hills, NY 11364
(718) 949-6444 * www.Local1056.org*

For more information:
Corey Bearak, ATU 1056 Policy & Political Director
(718) 343-6779/ (516) 343-6207