



Amalgamated Transit Union, Local 998

Affiliated With AFL-CIO

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Office of the President, *Donnell Shorter*

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To the County Board Safety and Security Task Force,

As part of our union's fight for safe, reliable public transit in Milwaukee County, ATU Local 998 endorses the transit ranger proposal to improve safety and security on buses. We ask the task force to recommend the transit ranger pilot program to the entire Milwaukee County board to adopt. ATU also recommends installing monitors in the passenger compartment to show live video feed of the passenger compartment.

As part of the County Board Safety and Security Task force, ATU bus operators have spoken up about the need for improved security for Milwaukee buses, often raising issues of assaults, harassment, often met by slow response times and inaction by dispatch and MCTS overall. Feedback from operators is that Allied, the security company subcontracted by MCTS, does not offer professional, responsive assistance to the drivers.

Our support is contingent on ATU continuing to be a part of the transit ranger program development process to establish protocols for the new security program. We need to develop systems together for how rangers operate, responding to security calls from drivers and riding along on routes with high volume of security calls. We want to ensure security calls go directly to rangers working from the dispatch office. Processes for conflict resolution must be established, including removing threatening passengers from buses. Our goal is for drivers and passengers to feel safe on buses and to improve service for all of Milwaukee County.

We bring our support for piloting the transit ranger program, asking for 50 rangers in the first year, as part of many steps that need to be taken to improve our transit system and public services. Improving security for buses is an important part of what needs to be an overall investment in public transit in Milwaukee County, new and improved buses, restored routes and stops, and recruiting and retaining operators and mechanics. All these steps need funding and member input to be successful.

Our buses don't operate in a vacuum. More and more, we see increased number of riders who are unhoused, or struggling with mental illness or drug/alcohol addiction. The ranger program offers the possibility of trained staff offering support and resources for people in this vulnerable position, but the county needs to invest in mental health and housing support, so folks have safe, alternative places to go.

Sincerely,

Michael Brown

Donnell Shorter