



Transport Workers Union of America, AFL-CIO

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March 27, 2020

SUBJ: Coronavirus update: Government Affairs

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

The *Coronavirus Air, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act* was passed by the U.S. Senate and House this week and will be signed into law shortly. TWU International worked hard to make sure this bill includes our priorities and we are proud to say that the final product is pro-worker at every level. Every **TWU local will benefit from this legislation which should allow most of our properties to avoid furloughs/layoffs** and keep workers whole for the immediate term.

For the Transit, Utilities, Universities, and Services Division, we were able to secure many essential victories, including:

- \$25b in formula funds and state of good repair grants for coronavirus response (**this is the equivalent of ~2.8 times the amount** of federal funds transit agencies received under the most recent, non-emergency appropriations)
 - No local match required for any projected funded through these funds
 - **All of the money must be used for operational costs** associated with pandemic response (lost revenue and increased cleaning/PPE costs)
- **Prohibition on waiving labor protections** during the public health crisis, including 13c protections.
- **For school bus workers**, requires that all emergency funds distributed through the Department of Education **prioritize pay and benefits for workers**.

We won't know for a couple of weeks the exact amount of money going to individual transit agencies and municipalities, but these amounts should cover upwards of approximately 93% of the total projected shortfall for transit agencies.

For the worst-case scenario, where companies do furlough/layoff our members, we were also able to secure significant unemployment insurance (UI) upgrades as part of this legislation. These benefits include:

- **Waiving all waiting-periods to qualify** for UI (workers will be eligible immediately after they are forced to stop working).

- Waiving most eligibility requirements to allow workers who might not normally qualify for the UI to receive these benefits (this includes workers who may have previously exhausted their UI benefits)
- **An additional \$600/week** in federal benefits on top of state-based aid. This federal benefit will be available regardless of whether the state provides individuals any benefit.
- Requirements that all states allow workers to apply for UI benefits online.

It has been our goal throughout this process to ensure that as few TWU members as possible are forced to resort to UI. For those that must, however, we hope these benefits will ensure that all workers continue to be able to support their families throughout this crisis.

You can find more detailed flyers on both the [TUUS specific wins](#) in this legislation and [the changes to unemployment insurance](#) on [the TWU website](#). These flyers are designed to be shared with your membership and posted at worksites.

Please reach out to your International Representative if you have any questions about this legislation or any other concern. We appreciate your work to keep all of your members healthy and safe as we fight this pandemic.

Fraternally,



Curtis Tate
International Administrative Vice President
Director-Transit, Universities, Utilities and Services Division

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