



Transport Workers Union of America, AFL-CIO

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"AMERICA'S FIGHTING DEMOCRATIC UNION"

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December 22, 2020

Dear Local Presidents:

After months of lobbying by the TWU, today Congressional leaders announced a new stimulus bill to fight the economic fallout from the ongoing pandemic. The agreement, known as the *Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021* will be passed by Congress and signed into in the coming days. 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 will return furloughed workers to their jobs and avoid further furloughs/layoffs through the Spring.**

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

- \$14b in formula funds and state of good repair grants for coronavirus response prioritized to the systems that need operating support the most
 - 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 (payroll, increased cleaning/PPE costs, etc.)
 - **Systems must certify that they have not furloughed any workers** before they may spend the funds on anything other than payroll
- \$2b in support for school bus, over-the-road bus, and private transit contractors
 - At least 60% of any grant awarded under this section must be spent on payroll
 - Any furloughed workers must be recalled in seniority order and provided backpay
- **Prohibition on waiving labor protections** during the public health crisis, including 13(c) protections.

Between the CARES Act and this next round of fund, most transit agencies will receive subsidies equivalent to at least 75% of their 2018 operating costs.

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 \$300/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.

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 near the end of this pandemic.

Fraternally,



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

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