

# AMALGAMATED TRANSIT UNION DISPATCH



## International President Costa in Georgia to Get the Vote Out for Critical Senate Runoff Election

Today, International President Costa was on the ground in Atlanta, Georgia, to mobilize members and residents to get out the vote for Senator Reverend Raphael Warnock in the critical Senate elections. The ATU has been out in full force in Georgia to ensure that we secure a 51-member majority to get things done for American workers.

The first stop was the Local **732**-Atlanta, GA, union hall, where President Costa met with President Britt Dunams and Local staff to thank them for their efforts. Next, Costa and Dunams visited Five Points, the largest transit hub in Atlanta, where they met with members who have been canvassing, phone banking, and writing postcards and talked to our bus operators to remind them to vote.

The group then headed to Brady Garage, where our MARTA Mobility paratransit members work. Costa talked to them about the elections, passed out t-shirts and flyers, and thanked them for everything they do every day to serve the Atlanta community.

The last stop was the IBEW union hall, where the AFL-CIO has been dispatching election volunteers. Costa spoke with volunteers and took a tour of the hall in preparation for a rally with labor leaders and Sen. Rev. Warnock. It was an inspiring day seeing all the work being done by labor to secure this win for Georgia. See you tomorrow, Atlanta!

## ATU Stands in Solidarity with Rail Unions' Workers



For more than three years, our brothers and sisters at America's rail unions have bargained in good faith with freight rail companies to improve hellish working conditions. While progress was made on key issues, the greedy rail companies held the American economy hostage over providing their workers paid sick leave. The issue went to Congress, our Union stood with our fellow union members to demand Congress grant them sick days. "Rail workers have been heroes keeping our economy moving and won wage increases and other improvements thanks to the efforts of the President,

the House of Representatives, and Senate leadership, but 43 Senators abandoned them and all working people by failing to pass paid sick leave for these essential workers. Those same Senators have paid sick leave but have chosen to side with the rail freight companies and their CEOs who have lined their pockets on the backs of their workers,” said ATU International President John Costa. “This fight is not over, and we stand in solidarity with our fellow union members at the rail unions because paid sick leave is a fundamental right not only for every rail worker but every American worker.”

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## Help ATU Members Impacted by the Tornadoes in Southern U.S.



This week, Mother Nature unleashed her wrath with destructive and dangerous tornadoes that hit Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi. We have members who work and live in these devastated communities where homes and property were destroyed by these powerful tornadoes. When a crisis hits, ATU members do what they do every day on the job and in their communities. They don't ask questions about when, where, and how. They just help out. You can provide assistance to your fellow members and their families

impacted by these tornadoes by contributing to the ATU Disaster Relief Fund by clicking below.

[CLICK HERE](#)

## Our Local 508-Halifax, NS, Hosts “Stuff-A-Bus” Holiday Food Drive



Our Union and Locals have a long history of giving back to their communities, especially during the holidays, and this year is no exception. In Halifax, NS, our Local **508** is participating in their longtime Stuff-A-Bus campaign to collect food and donations for families in need to be able to enjoy holiday meals. Through this campaign with Feed Nova Scotia, the Local has been helping out Nova Scotians since 1991. Let us know if your Local does a similar event or other charitable activities around the holidays by emailing

details and photos to [officeofthepresident@atu.org](mailto:officeofthepresident@atu.org)

# Tampa, FL, Local 1593 Calls for Ouster of HART CEO Amidst Mismanagement, Scandals, and Toxic Work Environment



Amidst continued mismanagement, scandals, firings, and a continuing toxic work environment, our Local **1593**-Tampa, FL, members are demanding the ouster of Hillsborough Area Regional Transit (HART) CEO Adelee Le Grand. “HART has been in a downward spiral under the leadership of Adelee Le Grand,” said Local Trustees Ismael Rivera and Brenda Moore. “The departure of 57 employees by unjust firings and resignations, and numerous scandals, including the hiring of double dipping Teri Wright have

created a hostile workplace and toxic culture. Ms. Le Grand is ruling with an iron fist, it’s her way or the highway. Unfortunately, her highway leads to a dysfunctional transit system.” It’s gotten so bad our members have no idea who to contact about basic issues, including payroll, health care, safety, training, and other matters. “Ms. Le Grand must be held accountable for her abhorrent leadership and continued disrespect and intimidation of our members and all HART workers,” said ATU International President John Costa. “We call on the HART Board to remove Ms. Le Grand from her position immediately.”

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# Our Local 998-Milwaukee, WI, Ratifies Strong Contract



After more than seven months of contract talks, a strike authorization vote, practice pickets, and other actions, our Local **998**-Milwaukee, WI, members ratified a strong three-year contract with the Milwaukee County Transit System (MCTS). “We believe the contract itself is a good contract,” said Local President Donnell Shorter, pointing to the wage increases, a secure retirement, and other improvements for our members. “We were trying to get a wage that was competitive in the transportation industry.” The new contract also includes two

policy changes that should improve the work-life balance for our bus operators. The first is a reduction in the length of time the company can hold workers after their eight-hour shift is completed. The second is an increase in the mandatory rest period. Now, the Local wants to work with the County to secure more state funding for MCTS to help expand service for riders who depend on public transit.

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## ATU Celebrates Overturning of Bill 124, Abolishing Wage Cap Law for Public Sector Workers in Ontario



In a big victory for Ontario public workers and our Union, the Ontario Superior Court of Justice overturned Bill 124, which limited wages for public sector workers. The bill, which the Ford government introduced, came into effect in 2019, capping wages for some public sector workers at one percent over a three-year period, including our members working in public transit. "This court decision confirms what we've been saying about Bill 124, that it is a deliberate attack on the constitutional rights of workers," said ATU

International President John Costa. "The ATU is proud to stand with over 70 unions who challenged this unjust law that stripped union members of their right to bargain freely." Supreme Court Justice Markus Koehnen found the bill to be unconstitutional. "I recently traveled to Toronto to stand on the picket lines with our Local 1587-Toronto, ON, GO Transit members who, after a four-day strike, got a contract that guaranteed their jobs won't be contracted out," continued Costa. "Due to Bill 124, wages were not on the table except for language we were able to secure a wage reopener if Bill 124 was reversed. Now is the time for public sector workers to get what they are due."

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## Local 1447-Louisville, KY, Members Vote In Favor Of New Contract After Months Of Negotiations



Our Local **1447**-Louisville, KY, members overwhelmingly voted to ratify a strong new contract with the Transit Authority of River City (TARC). The deal includes significant gains as a result of an aggressive campaign, including members bravely voting to authorize a possible first strike in TARC's history. "I want to be clear: we aren't here because of the generosity of TARC," said Local President Lillian Brents. "We got here because Local 1447 members mobilized again and again, in the sweltering heat and

freezing cold, to push back against a pattern of abuse, disrespect, and greed by TARC leadership." On the day of the vote, members said TARC was claiming the tentative agreement was already ratified before the voting had been completed, jeopardizing the final vote. But our members are familiar with TARC management's dishonesty and dysfunction and voted to pass the new contract. The Local says there are still issues to address, including safety. "While this is a big victory, our members' solidarity, strength, and unity show TARC management that we will continue to fight for improved working conditions and a better and safer transit system that TARC riders deserve," said ATU International President John Costa.

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## After Securing Contract, Our Local 1287-Kansas City, MO, Pushes for Increased Safety and Other Improvements



With a strong new contract in place with wage increases, our Local **1287**-Kansas City, MO, is now focusing on making our members feel safe and valued to retain and attract bus operators to the Kansas City Area Transit Authority (KCATA). “We just had an 18-year veteran say they can’t do it anymore,” said Local President Will Howard. “She’s working at the water department now.” Since the pandemic, driving a bus has become increasingly stressful and more dangerous. Also, Kansas City’s affordable housing shortage

contributes to the friction. Many unhoused people board buses for shelter. “So, they get on the bus, it’s cold or hot or whatever it is, but we’re not designed to do this,” Howard continued. “Operators ask them to step off the bus, sometimes an altercation or fight happens. This has killed the workforce.” The Local is pushing for an increased presence of security or supervisors on buses to help with these issues. In addition, the Local also believes KCATA could improve morale by just listening to bus operators more about their concerns.

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