



# MTA Labor Coalition Urges Support to Increase Penalties for Spitting on an MTA Employee

January 29, 2021

**Dear Senators and Assembly Members:**

We are writing to you about an unacceptable plague of abuse inflicted upon subway, bus, and commuter railroad workers. As union presidents, we represent the overwhelming majority of the 70,000 employees at the Metropolitan Transportation Authority in the NYC Transit, Metro-North Railroad and Long Island Rail Road divisions.

Every year, hundreds of transit workers are spat upon. It's one of the most vile and disgusting forms of abuse imaginable. It's even more harrowing and traumatizing because of the pandemic and the risk of being infected with COVID-19.

Amazingly, spitting is considered harassment under the law. It's a violation like parking your car at an expired meter. The police can't make an arrest unless they actually witness a spitting incident, which never happens.

Our members were spat upon more than 200 times last year and the year before.

Think about that. Roughly four times a week, someone walks up to a conductor or a bus operator or cleaner – and spits on them. Why? Because there are no real consequences or deterrent for this disgusting behavior.

**Current law does not give transit workers the respect and protection they need and deserve.**

You can change that. The Governor's proposed budget includes a penal law amendment that would make spitting on a transit or commuter railroad worker aggravated harassment, a misdemeanor, potentially punishable by months in jail.

We strongly support the amendment. On behalf of our hardworking members, we are asking you to sign onto this proposal and enact it.

**Thank you,**

**John Samuelson**, International President, Transport Workers Union

**Tony Utano**, President, Transport Workers Union Local 100

**Danny Cassella**, President, Amalgamated Transit Union Local 726

**Anthony Simon**, General Chairman, Transportation Division  
Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers Association (SMART)

**Edward Valente**, General Chairman, Association of Commuter Rail Employees (ACRE)

**Mark Henry**, President, Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1056

**Vincent Modafferri**, President, Transport Workers Union Local 106

**Michael Cordiello**, President, Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1181

**Mike Carrube**, President, Subway Surface Supervisors Association

**Jose DeJesus**, President, Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1179



























