



TWU LOCAL 100 IN THE NEWS

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Rangel blasts bus driver busts



One big damn mistake

Tells Bill failure-to-yield arrests a turn for worse

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CONGRESSMAN Charles Rangel has some advice for the mayor: "Don't embarrass yourself" by arresting bus drivers under the Vision Zero law.

Rangel, appearing at a Harlem bus depot, said it's "stupid" and "makes no sense at all" for cops enforcing the legislation to criminally charge drivers who hit pedestrians in a crosswalk without evidence of reckless acts like speeding or texting.

"Common sense would indicate that when (lawmakers) were thinking about this, the last thing in the world they were thinking about is a bus driver doing their duty would be arrested," Rangel (D-N.Y.) said Monday at the Mother Clara Hale Depot.

"Right now, we should be calling the mayor and telling him, 'Don't embarrass yourself.' Anybody can make a mistake and this is just one big damn mistake, that's all, because isn't a joke." The City Council legislation,



Rep. Charles Rangel, at Harlem's Mother Clara Hale Depot, said Mayor de Blasio shouldn't "embarrass" himself by having transit workers cuffed.

signed into law by Mayor de Blasio last year, was designed to make the streets safer by elevating what was a traffic violation to a misdemeanor.

It makes it a criminal offense when a driver hits someone in a crosswalk and the collision results in serious injury or death.

It applies to all drivers, not just transit workers.

But in an aggressive campaign, Transport Workers Union Local 100 has protested its application to Metropolitan Transport

ation Authority bus operators.

The union says buses have "blind spots" because of the placement of their mirrors. At least six MTA bus drivers have been charged with failing to yield since the law went into effect, with five of the incidents involving fatalities.

Street-safety advocates and relatives of those killed in crosswalk collisions contend the "failure to yield" law is needed to hold drivers "accountable" for

avoidable crosswalk collisions and to encourage others to drive more carefully.

Vision Zero includes an array of measures — redesigning dangerous intersections, giving pedestrians more time to cross boulevards and increasing the deployment of speed cameras.

"The new failure-to-yield law is a vital tool in our efforts to protect pedestrians and make our streets safer," de Blasio spokesman Wiley Norvell said.

Rangel also told bus drivers and union officers in the depot to enlist the support of other unions because "when something this stupid comes up I think we should tell everybody we're in this boat together."

Fixing the legislative flaw shouldn't be a heavy lift, Rangel said.

"All it really requires is taking a deep breath, look at this thing and seeing it doesn't make any damn sense at all," he said.

PHOTOS BY ALAN SALY

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