

## **ATU Recommendations for Improving Transit Security in the U.S. and Canada**

### **Include Transit Labor in Dialogue, Planning and Implementation of Security Measures**

The U.S. and Canadian governments, as well as transit employers, must make a real effort to include transit labor in any discussions about security concerns and needs, especially during the planning and implementation process. Transit employees are on the front lines of this battle and can offer valuable information and assistance in addressing security matters. Effective implementation of security measures is best achieved through a joint labor/management security committee.

### **Mandatory Security Plans for All Transit Agencies**

The U.S. and Canadian governments must make security plans mandatory for all transit systems, regardless of type of vehicle, size of system or population-served by the system.

Specifically, every transit system should **develop and instruct their employees on a protocol** to follow in emergency or potentially dangerous situations. This protocol should include, among other things, who the driver should contact when a security situation develops, when the driver can refuse service to a passenger who poses a danger to the driver and/or passengers, when a driver should stop the vehicle, when passengers should be evacuated from the vehicle and how to report incidents after-the-fact. In addition, every transit system should engage in **communications with local law enforcement** and should provide authorities with route maps, schedules and descriptions so that they may respond quickly in an emergency situation.

### **Dedicated Funding for Transit Security**

Both the U.S. and Canadian governments should dedicate a set amount of federal dollars to be used by transit agencies to improve system security. Transit agencies should be able to use this money for any operating or other expenses related to security, including training for employees, uniformed security personnel, installation of new security devices, etc.

### **Security Training for Transit Employees**

Both governments should also implement security training programs or expand existing programs, including those conducted by the USDOT in conjunction with NTI, to include security training for transit employees. Currently, programs focus primarily on law enforcement and upper-level transit system employees. Since it is the transit operators themselves that are often on the front lines when security breaches occur, these employees must be trained on how to respond in given situations. In addition, transit maintenance personnel should be trained to recognize explosive devices that may be attached to transit vehicles and any other type of vehicle tampering that could endanger the lives of those aboard a transit vehicle or in a transit station.

### **Support for Development, Advancement and Increased Usage of New Security Devices**

Government should actively support and encourage the development and advancement of new technologies and equipment that have security benefits, such as driver shields and low-floor buses. In the past, our members have sought to have buses equipped with driver shields, only to be unhappy with the restrictions the shields place upon the driver. New shields are currently being developed and tested to address these concerns. The U.S. and Canadian governments should support these efforts. In addition, the increasing use of low-floor buses has helped to reduce violent attacks against bus operators. These buses place drivers upon a platform and away from passengers who are boarding or exiting the vehicle, thus resulting in fewer driver-passenger confrontations. The increased use of low-floor buses should be encouraged.

### **Protection of Existing Employees from Unnecessary Background Checks**

With respect to federal proposals to requiring transportation employees to pass thorough criminal background checks, the governments must ensure that existing employees subject to the proposed criminal background checks are not deprived of their jobs simply because a past criminal conviction, for which the employee has served their time, is suddenly discovered. There must be some sort of due process before existing employees can be disqualified. In addition, existing employees should not be required to pay for their own government-mandated background checks and identity cards - these costs should be borne by the employer and/or the federal governments.

In order to protect the privacy of transportation employees, we propose that, at least in the transit and over-the-road bus industries, where Commercial Drivers' Licenses (CDLs) are required to operate commercial passenger vehicles, the background checks should be required as a condition of getting a CDL, not when an employee applies for a job. This would ensure that the personal information obtained through such checks is not accessible by employers. Any efforts to impose background checks on Canadian transit employees should include similar protections for existing employees.

### **Federal Penalties for Persons Who Attack Canadian Transit Workers**

Despite the important public service they provide and the accompanying risks they face on the job everyday, transit operators receive very little protection under federal and provincial laws. While the Canadian government is proposing to subject a person who assaults an airline pilot or a flight attendant to federal penalties, the same deterrent is not applied to those who attack the bus and rail operators who transport us daily to work, home, shopping, medical facilities and other destinations. Likewise, most provincial laws treat such attacks only as simple misdemeanor assaults.