

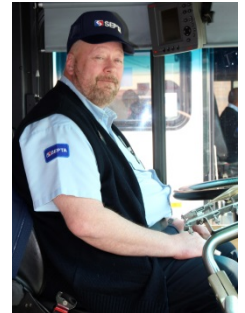


## **Transport Workers Union Local 234**

# **Transit Worker and Rider Public Safety Conference**



**Thursday April 25, 2013  
9:00 am to 2:30 pm  
TWU Local 234 Hall  
500 North Second St.  
Philadelphia, PA**

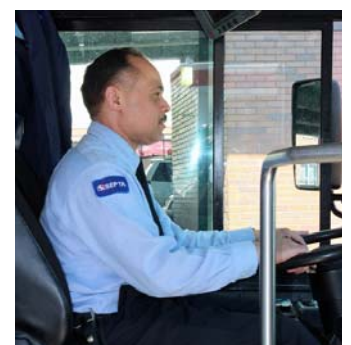


# **WE ARE IN THIS TOGETHER!**



The campaign to improve safety on public transit and to reduce assaults on transit workers and riders includes coordination with local law enforcement agencies, legislators, and community organizations. The riding public and Local 234 members have the most to lose if the violence is not addressed.

Violence on public transportation is not just an issue for SEPTA and TWU, but a matter of safety for every rider, pedestrian, cyclist, and motorist in the region who could and would be affected by assaults on transit workers and riders. **Our goal is to build transit worker and rider unity based on our joint interest in safe public transit.**



# Welcome



Thank you for attending our conference. Local 234 takes the growing number of assaults on transit workers extremely seriously. I formed the TWU Local 234 Operator and Public Safety Task Force in 2011. The Task Force members are operators who were victims of assaults and are committed to improving safety on public transportation. The Task Force conducted a survey of TWU operators to measure the extent of the problem, getting feedback on possible solutions, and identifying trouble locations. Based on the survey, TWU provided recommendations to SEPTA on steps to reduce the assaults. At that time, SEPTA operators reported 83 assaults from January through November that was more than twice the number of assaults recorded for all of 2010. Also in 2010, gunmen injured two drivers within one weekend. In June 2011, two men shot up a SEPTA bus with automatic weapons.

Local 234 has taken steps to bring the issue out in the open. After a shooting of a female operator in October 2011, I invited SEPTA's Chief Operating Officer, Mayor Michael Nutter, Police Commissioner Charles Ramsey, Philadelphia District Attorney Seth Williams, and Pennsylvania State Senator Christine Tartaglione to join me in calling for a coordinated action plan to bring this problem to the public's attention and to do something about it.

In particular, the Local urged SEPTA to partner with the union to review policy and to invest in operator and passenger safety. This includes improved lighting at isolated locations and bus design changes to reduce risks for operators and riders. The union also pointed out the need to reevaluate communication protocols between operators, SEPTA Control Center, SEPTA Police, and the Philadelphia Police Departments with an eye towards reducing police response time.

**TWU is working to stop the violence on public transit.** In April 2012, we met with Philadelphia District Attorney Seth Williams who offered to assign Assistant District Attorneys to cases involving attacks on transit workers. We held a rally against violence where State Senator Tina Tartaglione and Representative Ed Neilson along with Cindy Bass and David Oh from City Council showed their support. In May 2012, TWU hosted a meeting with Police Commissioner Ramsey and Deputy Commission Richard Ross to coordinate Philadelphia Police and Transit Police protection on SEPTA. We are coordinating this effort with the TWU SEPTA Joint Health and Safety Committee and the SEPTA Board who agreed to form a special committee.

On the Legislative front, we encourage you to support the passage of SB 282 which provides protection to transit employees across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Successful prosecution of incidents under this law will raise awareness among the public and act as a deterrent for would-be perpetrators. We urge you to pass this important legislation to help stop violence and to make Pennsylvania's public system transit safer.

TWU is taking this a step further by building coalitions with community groups to work for improved safety for riders and operators. On June 27, 2012, a passenger came to the rescue of an operator that was being choked by an angry rider. When the bus driver was in danger, Mohammed Stevens came to the rescue and helped to subdue the assailant who was armed with a knife. Fortunately, he removed the knife and threw it off the bus and then helped to restrain the attacker. This hero gives us a model for how SEPTA riders and TWU members must unite to stop the violence.

While operating a bus out of the Allegheny District, I was held up at gunpoint and robbed of my coat. I will never forget that moment. I thought that I was going to meet my maker. As President of Local 234, I have done everything within my power to stop the violence on public transportation. Local 234 officers, staff, and I have visited many of the operators while they were in the hospital recuperating after they were assaulted. We have accompanied them to court to hold the assailants accountable.

The riding public and Local 234 members have the most to lose if the violence is not addressed. The Transport Workers Union is reaching out to community organizations to jointly secure adequate funding for public transit some of which will go to improving security for transit workers and riders. Safe public transit is essential to a viable community.



By SOLOMON D. LEACH Published: November 19, 2012

## Philly bus drivers left vulnerable at the wheel

While making the last stop on the Route K bus at Ridge and Midvale a few months ago a female passenger walked up to Robin, called her a b—ch, and then without warning proceeded to spit on her and punch her in the face.

“I was really nervous, shaken up,” recalled the SEPTA operator, who has been on the job less than two years and declined to give her last name. “When the passengers are standing close to me or right behind me, I’m always aware and looking in my mirror at what they’re doing because I don’t know if they’re going to assault me either.”

Robin is among 67 SEPTA operators assaulted this year, compared to 77 a year ago. SEPTA implemented mandatory de-escalation training for operators last year after a rash of assaults, but Transportation Workers Union Local 234 President John Johnson argued that training cannot help in all instances, such as Robin’s case.

“If the attack is unprovoked and you have no idea it’s going to happen, how do you deescalate it?” Johnson questioned.

Several transit agencies have responded to the nationwide rise in attacks on operators by installing clear plastic shields that insulate drivers from passengers. NJ Transit is installing the shields on 820 buses after completing a pilot program and New York City’s Metropolitan Transportation Authority is installing the shields on its entire fleet of 5,600 buses. SEPTA Director of System Safety James Fox said the authority has considered the idea, but wants to see the outcomes of the programs in New Jersey and New York before making the investment on its 1,400-bus fleet.

“We really think that though the shield has some value, [we want to see] whether the shield does what it’s supposed to do,” Fox said last week. He also mentioned concerns about the cost to retrofit buses and the impact on customer service.

### Official: Bus shields only part of solution

The head of the Amalgamated Transit Union, which represents thousands of mass transit operators, said bus shields are just part of what needs to be done to enhance protection for operators. “If you really want to solve the problem, the solution would be top flight communications ... developing shields into new bus design, bigger, better work stations for drivers, and getting police assigned,” ATU President Larry Hanley said.

SEPTA said it has increased police patrols on its vehicles in conjunction with the Philadelphia Police Department to help deter crime.

### Union to talk to SEPTA

Johnson said he plans to talk with SEPTA about purchasing shields and wants to “explore every option that’s available” to protect operators.



**Contact Transport Workers Union Local 234 to learn more about the campaign to stop assaults on public transportation.**

**Join us to address this urgent matter. It’s time to stand together to stop violence on public transportation.**

**Call (215) 972-4140 or visit [www.twu234.org](http://www.twu234.org)**



## Law Enforcement Panel

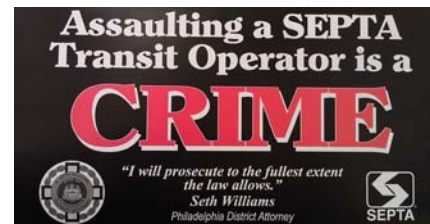
**Panelists:** Philadelphia Police Commissioner Charles Ramsey  
SEPTA Chief of Police Thomas Nestel III

**Facilitator:** TWU Local 234 Vice President Dickie Bizzle, Jr.

**Topic:** The spike in assaults in 2011 and 2012 created a crisis that demanded a new approach to stem the assaults on bus operators and riders. TWU Local 234 met with SEPTA Transit Police, the Philadelphia Police Commissioner, and the District Attorney to explore what can be done to reduce assaults. What has been done and what more can be done?

### Questions and Answers

---



## Legislative Panel

**Introduction:** PA Representative Michael McGeehan Transit Committee Co-chair

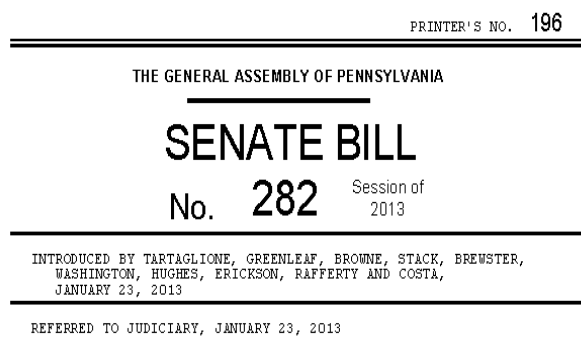
**Panelists:** PA Senator Tina Tartaglione  
PA Representative Chelle Parker  
PA Representative Brendan Boyle  
PA Representative Michael O'Brien  
PA Rep. Nicholas Micozzie Staff Kathleen Theurer

**Facilitator:** TWU Local 234 Political Director David Szczepanski

**Topic:** The legislation to designate transit workers as a protected job classification needs support to pass. What else can be done to support the campaign to reduce violence on public transportation?

### Questions and Answers

---



## Union and Community Voices Panel

**Introduction:** Philadelphia City Councilperson Cindy Bass

**Panelists:** Aissia Richardson, SEPTA Citizen Advisory Committee  
Henry Nicholas, President District 1199C AFSCME  
Fabricio Rodriguez, Restaurant Opportunity Center  
Joe Alussio, SEIU 32 BJ  
Gwen Snyder, Jobs With Justice  
Anne Gemmell, Fight for Philly  
Harry Schwartz, SEPTA rider

**Facilitator:** TWU Local 234 Vice President Carl Greer

**Topic:** SEPTA riders and TWU members have the most to lose when violence erupts on public transit. The panel will explore how unions and the community can work together to improve safety.

### Questions and Answers





## **TWU LOCAL 234 OPERATOR AND PUBLIC SAFETY TASK FORCE**

TWU Local 234 has committed resources to ensure that operator and cashier assaults as well as public safety will be addressed. In October 2011, President Johnson assigned TWU Local 234 Executive Vice President André Jones, Sr., Vice President Dickie Bizzle, Jr., and Vice President Carl Greer to lead the Task Force comprised of operators from various districts who experienced violence while operating SEPTA vehicles.

TWU Local 234 formed the ***Operator and Public Safety Task Force*** with operators who know what the real problems are so that we can find real solutions. The Task Force includes bus and rail operators from eight SEPTA locations. This report starts the campaign to bring together the key partners that can have a role in finding solutions.

As a first step, TWU Local 234 leadership defined the purpose and role of the task force. They drafted a time line that includes a plan for bringing together all the necessary participants listed above and to develop a campaign to address the issues.

### **The Task Force has the following goals:**

- To survey public transit vehicle operators and to document how they view safety and their job.
- To analyze the data concerning random assaults related to fare disputes.
- To address the working relationship between operators, supervisors, and the SEPTA Control Center.
- To inform the riding public, the transit agency, and policy makers and invite them to join the campaign to stop the violence that threatens operators and the public.
- To develop a campaign so that the public understands that TWU Local 234 members are there for the riders to provide safe and efficient transportation.
- To build coalitions to address operator and public safety that will include SEPTA, local government agencies, riders, and the community.
- To provide recommendations to SEPTA, the City of Philadelphia, and appropriate community organizations.
- To maintain vigilance on operator and public safety on an ongoing basis.

### **TWU LOCAL 234 OPERATOR AND PUBLIC SAFETY TASK FORCE MEMBERS**

Ralph Branch, Allegheny District

John Richardson, Callowhill District

Sara Nava, Frontier District

Genna Sykes, Southern District

Frank Thomas, Comly District

Gymone Murphy, Elmwood District

Jennifer Moss, Midvale District

Tony Toklish, Comly District

Nathanial Smith, Frankford

#### **Have you ever witnessed an assault on the public while operating a bus?**

Among the 472 operators responding to the survey, 64% have witnessed an assault. **Cause for the assault**

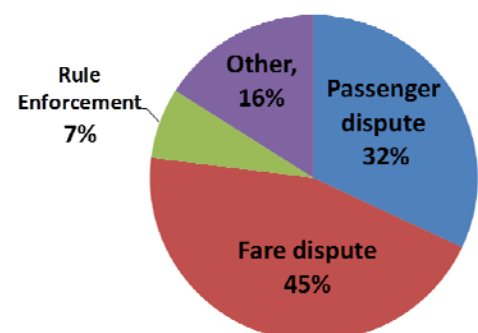
Among the 325 who reported being either a victim or witness to an assault, the survey requested that the respondent chose from the following:

Fare Dispute - 45%

Passenger Dispute - 32%

Rule Enforcement - 7%

Other \_\_\_\_\_ - 16%



# Transport Workers Union Local 234

## Transit Worker and Rider Safety Conference

### Agenda

**Video collage of TWU Local 234 campaign against assaults on operators**

<b>9:00 AM</b>	<b>Welcome</b>	<b>TWU Local 234 Executive Vice President Andre' Jones, Sr.</b>
	<b>Invocation</b>	<b>TWU Local 234 Executive Board Member Donald Dennison</b>
	<b>Opening Address</b>	<b>Phila. Council AFL –CIO President Patrick Eiding</b> <b>TWU Local 234 President John Johnson, Jr.</b> <b>SEPTA General Manager Joe Casey</b>
<b>9:45 AM</b>	<b>Bus Operator</b>	<b>Operator: Tony Toklish</b> <b>Operator video</b>
<b>10:00 AM</b>	<b>Law Enforcement Panel</b>	<b>Facilitator: TWU Local 234 Vice President Dickie Bizzle, Jr.</b> <b>SEPTA Chief of Police Thomas Nestel</b> <b>Phila. Police Commissioner Charles Ramsay</b> <b>Phila. District Attorney Seth Williams</b>
		<b>Questions and Answers</b>
<b>10:45 AM</b>	<b>Break</b>	<b>Coffee and Donuts</b>
<b>11:00 AM</b>	<b>Law Enforcement</b>	<b>Philadelphia District Attorney Seth Williams</b>
<b>11:15 AM</b>	<b>Bus Operator</b>	<b>Operator: John Richardson</b>
<b>11:30 AM</b>	<b>National Perspective</b>	<b>Transport Workers Union Director of Health and Safety Ed Watt</b>
<b>11:45 AM</b>	<b>Bus Operator</b>	<b>Operator: Genna Sykes</b>
<b>Noon</b>	<b>Lunch</b>	<b>Provided by Transport Workers Union</b>

The TWU Local 234 Operator and Public Safety Task Force surveyed TWU bus and trolley operators in the City Transit Division to gather data and obtain firsthand knowledge of the types of assaults, their locations, and the reasons behind them. Local 234 mailed the survey to 2,500 TWU city and transit bus and trolley operators along with 110 completed at the Frontier District for a total of 2,610 surveys to get their ideas on how to reduce assaults. 472 (18%) completed and returned the survey. TWU Local 234 officers and SEPTA managers will use the survey results to develop options to reduce assaults.

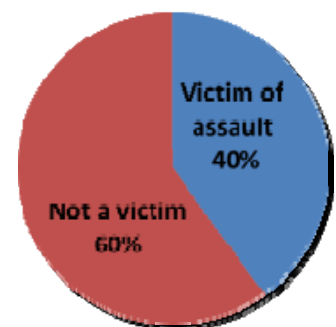
#### **RESPONSES**

##### **Have you ever been a victim of assault while operating a bus?**

190 (40%) of the 472 operators surveyed responded that they had been assaulted.

##### **Was your assault reported?**

Among those 190 who reported an assault, 89% reported it to the SEPTA Control Center. The 11% who did not report did not list reasons.



<b>12:30 PM</b>	<b>Welcome Back</b>	<b>TWU Local 234 Business Agent Theodora Boyd</b>
	<b>Testimonies</b>	<b>Operators: Frank Thomas and Ed Ruth</b>
<b>12:45 PM</b>	<b>Legislation</b>	<b>PA Representative Michael McGeehan Transit Committee Co-chair</b>
	<b>Legislation Panel</b>	<b>Facilitator: Dave Szczepanski</b> <b>PA Senator Tina Tartaglione, Sponsor of Bill</b> <b>PA Representative Brendan Boyle</b> <b>PA Representative Cherelle Parker</b> <b>PA Representative Michael O'Brien</b> <b>PA Representative Micozzie Staff Katherine Theurer</b> <b>Questions and Answers</b>
<b>1:00 PM</b>	<b>G.A.L.S.</b>	<b>Students involved in G.A.L.S. (the Girls Advocacy and Leadership Series--a jointly sponsored project of the New Century Trust and the Women's Campaign International) have formed a group called "sickofit," focusing on the need to reduce sexual harassment on public transit.</b>
<b>1:15 PM</b>	<b>Community</b>	<b>Philadelphia Councilwoman Cindy Bass</b>
	<b>Community Panel</b>	<b>Facilitator: TWU Local 234 Vice President Carl Greer</b> <b>Andrew Austin – Americans for Transit</b> <b>Aissia Richardson – SEPTA Citizen Advisory Committee</b> <b>Henry Nicholas – President 1199C</b> <b>Fabricio Rodriguez – Restaurant Opportunity Center</b> <b>Frank Austin – TWU Local 100</b> <b>Joe Alussio - SEIU 32 BJ</b> <b>Gwen Snyder – Jobs with Justice</b> <b>Anne Gemmell - Fight for Philly</b> <b>Harry Schwartz - SEPTA Rider</b>
<b>2:30 PM</b>	<b>Closing</b>	<b>TWU Local 100 President John Samuelson</b>

#### Other Reasons Given for Assault

Among the 52 saying 'other,' the responses are listed in the table below.

Reason	Number	Percent	Reason	Number	Percent
Random act of violence	12	23%	Mentally ill passengers	4	8%
Passenger fighting	9	17%	Robbery	4	8%
Drunk passengers	6	12%	Other	4	8%
Teens/kids/juveniles	4	8%	No reason given	9	17%
			<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Speakers and Panelists



**Andrew Austin** is the founding executive director of Americans for Transit, working to build a stronger transit rider and advocacy movement across the United States. A political hack turned transit nerd; he previously was the field director at Transportation Choices, in Washington State, where he led numerous transit ballot measures and organizing campaigns. Prior to Transportation Choices he managed numerous political campaigns and was an aide in the state legislature.



**Frank Austin of TWU Local 100 Bus Operators Action Committee (BOAC)** is TWU Local 100 Chairman of OA Division 2. He joined New York City Transit as a bus operator in 1989 and was first elected to union office in 1992. He was on special assignment during 9/11 helping to evacuate police and fire personnel during the attack. He drove a New York City bus to New Orleans to assist victims of Hurricane Katrina. He currently heads up the TWU Local 100's Bus Operators Action Committee.



**Philadelphia Councilwoman Cindy Bass** represents the 8<sup>th</sup> District (Chestnut Hill, Mount Airy, Germantown, Nicetown, Tioga, Logan, and parts of North Philadelphia). She is a life-long Philadelphian, graduating from public high school, and received a Bachelor's degree in business administration from Temple University. Using her background in community development and experience as Senior Policy Advisor on Urban and Domestic Policy to Congressman Chaka Fattah, Councilwoman Bass is dedicated to revitalizing the commercial corridors of the 8<sup>th</sup> District.



**PA Representative Brendan F. Boyle**, represents 170th legislative district in Montgomery and Philadelphia County. He was elected in 2008 and re-elected in 2010. The son of an Irish immigrant and Transit Workers Union 234 member, he graduated Harvard University's JFK School of Government in 2005. An active supporter of organized labor, Brendan has consistently supported legislative measures that have protected bargaining rights and enhanced protections for union workers and supported legislative measures that have protected bargaining rights and enhanced protections for union workers.



**Joseph M. Casey**, General Manager of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA), which is the 6th largest transit agency in the US and the largest in Pennsylvania. SEPTA was recognized by the Transportation Security Administration with the Gold Standard Award for Homeland Security; the Gold Level Certification from APTA for the SEPTA's commitment to sustainability programs; and the International Brunel Design Award for 3 Regional Rail Station renovation projects and the APTA 2012 Outstanding Transportation System Award.



**Anne Gemmell**, the Political Director of Fight for Philly, which is a campaign organizing in neighborhoods for economic justice at the local, state and federal level. She has organized community support in coordination with labor for issues related to corporate and banking accountability, education and electoral issues. She co-founded Education Voters PA in 2007 and devoted a decade to teaching & coaching in the Philadelphia School District. She serves as the Democratic committeewoman in the 2nd Ward in Queen Village and is raising three children.



**PA Representative Michael P. McGeehan** is in his 12<sup>th</sup> consecutive term. He is the longest serving state representative for the 173<sup>rd</sup> Legislative District. McGeehan, serving a second term as Democratic Chair of the House Transportation Committee, is also the first Pennsylvania House Member from Philadelphia to chair that panel. The committee oversees transportation in the Commonwealth including highways, airports, train service, public transit, ports and the Turnpike Commission. McGeehan was the majority Chairman of the PA House Professional Licensure Committee. For 18 years, Rep. McGeehan was a member of the PA House Labor Relations Committee, spearheading key fire safety and protection initiatives.



**Thomas J. Nestel, III** has 31 years of law enforcement experience. In 1985, Nestel joined the Philadelphia Police Department for more than 22 years of service and attained the rank of Staff Inspector. He served as the Chief of Police for Upper Moreland Township (PA). In August 2012, Nestel returned to SEPTA to become Chief of the SEPTA Transit Police Department. Nestel has a Master of Science in Public Safety a Master of Science in Criminology a Master of Arts in National Security Studies from the US Naval Postgraduate School. Nestel is presently working on his doctorate at the University of Pennsylvania.





**Henry Nicholas**, President of District 1199C National Union of Hospital and Health Care Employees AFSCME, organized hospital workers and within two years had won contracts for over 5,000 employees of Philadelphia's major health institutions. The District has members throughout the Philadelphia region to five counties in New Jersey. Mr. Nicholas held the office of Executive Vice President of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists International and has a history of supporting the campaign for transit funding.



**PA Representative Mike O'Brien** represents the 175th Legislative District, which runs from the lower Northeast to South Philadelphia through the River Wards of Central Philadelphia since 2006. Mike is a leading advocate for women's health and working family issues. Since first taking office Mike has sounded the alarm on the state's transportation funding crisis. He continues to work on a comprehensive plan to fix roads, bridges and mass transit systems, with particular emphasis on SEPTA. Mike serves as Democratic Vice Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee and the House Education, Health, State Government and Policy committees.



**PA House Cherelle L. Parker** made history in 2005 by becoming the youngest African-American woman ever elected to the Pennsylvania House of Representatives for the 200th Legislative District, of Mount Airy, Chestnut Hill, Roxborough, and Andorra in Philadelphia. She is Subcommittee Chair of Public Transportation on the Transportation Committee, as well as Vice Chair of the Policy Committee, and memberships to Appropriations, Labor & Industry, and Professional Licensure committees. In 2009, Rep. Parker was selected to join the Eisenhower Fellows.



**Charles H. Ramsey** was appointed **Police Commissioner of the Philadelphia Police Department** on January 7, 2008, by Mayor Michael A. Nutter. He leads the fourth largest police department in the nation with over 6,500 sworn members and 830 civilian members. Commissioner Ramsey brings over forty years of knowledge, experience and service in advancing the law enforcement profession in three different major city police departments, beginning with Chicago, then Washington, DC, and now Philadelphia. He is an internationally-recognized practitioner and educator in his field, and currently serves as President of both the Police Executive Research Forum and Major Cities Chiefs.



**Aissia Richardson** is the **Chair of the SEPTA Citizens Advisory Committee**. Ms. Richardson has been the President of the African American United Fund since 2006 and is the Uptown Entertainment and Development Vice President of Operations. She is also a board member of Bread and Roses Community Fund and is on the Advisory Committee for Digital Inclusion Group. She was appointed by Mayor Michael Nutter to serve on the SEPTA Citizens Advisory Committee representing Philadelphia and was elected in 2010 as its chair. She was elected in 2009 as the first African American woman to chair the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission Regional Citizens Committee and was reelected in 2010.



**PA Senator Christine M. Tartaglione**, elected in 1994, became only the fifth woman in state history to win election to the State Senate. During her four terms in office, she has served as Democratic Chair of the Aging and Youth Committee and is currently Democratic Chair of the Labor and Industry Committee. She also serves on the Senate Appropriations, Banking and Insurance, Law and Justice, Democratic Policy, and State Government Committees. During the 2005-2006 Legislative Session, the Senator's legislation raising Pennsylvania's minimum wage was signed into law after a six-year effort. She was also instrumental in the establishment of the Office for People with Disabilities in the Governor's Administration. Senator Tartaglione introduced legislation to designate transit workers as a protected classification.



**R. Seth Williams**, **District Attorney** of the City of Philadelphia since 2010 is the first African-American District Attorney in both the city of Philadelphia and in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Prior to becoming district attorney, Mr. Williams served as an Assistant District Attorney for 10 years. In 2005, he was appointed Inspector General of the City of Philadelphia and served the city until 2008. The District Attorney is also an adjunct professor at Villanova and Temple law schools, a major in the Judge Advocate General Corps of the United States Army Reserve and sits on several Philadelphia-area boards.

***Transport Workers Union Local 234 thanks the speakers and panelist for their contributions to the conference. And thank you all for your attendance. Please join the campaign to reduce assaults on public transportation.***



# *On The Move*

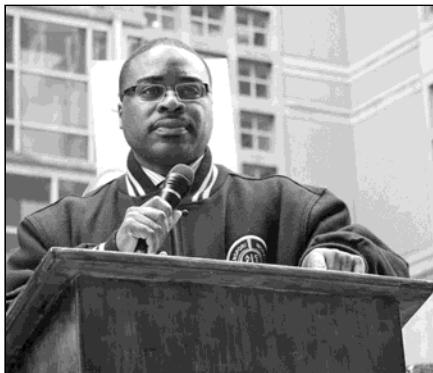


John Johnson, Jr.

May 15, 2012

Official Publication of the Transport Workers Union Local 234

## **“TRANSIT WORKERS AND RIDERS HAVE THE RIGHT TO WORK OR TRAVEL WITHOUT FEAR OF ATTACK!”**



President John Johnson, Jr. ready to face the SEPTA Board

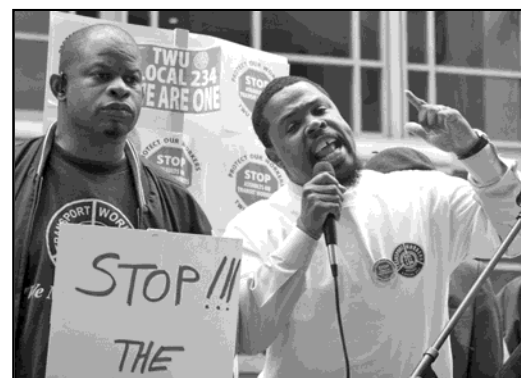
That's how President John Johnson started the rally. On April 26, TWU Local 234 members and riders protested against the violence on SEPTA property. Exec. Vice President André Jones fired up the crowd with his passionate appeal to stop the assaults and abuse of operators. Jones pointed out that when an operator was assaulted, he was at the hospital to check on the operator before SEPTA even though he lives 45 minutes away.

**“We don't come to work to get our ass kicked!”**

Jones got the crowd chanting “We'll be back!” letting SEPTA know that this rally is just the beginning of the campaign to protect operators and the riding public. TWU has not had a rally this size at SEPTA since the strike of 1998.

## **TWU LOCAL 234 IS DOING SOMETHING ABOUT THE ASSAULTS**

TWU has taken real steps to reduce violence on SEPTA vehicles. On May 9, Local 234 met with the Phila. Police Commissioner and SEPTA's Deputy Chief of Police to coordinate their forces to increase the police presence on buses. Operators have already reported that more police have been performing bus checks. Operators should request the card from their dispatcher and report incidents to their Location Safety Committees so that the police can focus on those trouble areas in their district. Commissioner Ramsey said that he would arrange for Police District Captains to coordinate with LSCs at the districts. Local 234 also presented the Task Force Report, survey results to SEPTA top management, Mayor Nutter, and District Attorney Seth Williams.



Exec. VP André Jones and Adam Williams, Local 234 Joint Health & Safety Committee Co-Chair



On April 24, Local 234 met with District Attorney Williams, who offered to assign Assistant DAs to each assault case. The D.A. also said that he would sign a posting on SEPTA vehicles that says, “*Transit workers and riders have the right to work or travel without fear of attack. If you assault an operator, you will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.*” The DA told Local 234 that, at the sentencing of the attacker, the victim of assault can invite TWU and coworkers to speak about assaults on operators. This can have an influence on the judge's decision on the amount of time the attacker serves behind bars.

# SPEAKERS AT RALLY SUPPORT LOCAL 234

A number of politicians, City Council members, and community representatives attended the rally. Pat Eiding, Phila. AFL-CIO President said, "Shame on Philadelphia, Shame on SEPTA! It's time for Mayor Nutter, Police Commissioner Ramsey and SEPTA to get your heads together and get together with the working people to improve safety on SEPTA." Henry Nicholas, President of 1199C Healthcare Workers, thanked TWU operators for taking care of his members who ride SEPTA. "We've always been with TWU and support you now!" TWU Local 100 representatives from New York came down to support the cause. SEPTA Board member John Kane of Plumbers Local 690 attended the rally. After listening to the speeches, Kane went into the SEPTA Board meeting and advocated for our cause. In solidarity, Local labor provided support, including Teamsters Local 107 who donated the truck for the stage and AFSCME District Council 33 who donated the sound system. Paola Pedraza-Rivera from Fight for Philly got the crowd chanting, "When you fight, You Win! This show of strength sent a message to SEPTA that TWU Local 234 is not alone. The crowd yelled, "We'll be back!" This is just the beginning of the campaign to stop the assaults.

## TWU LOCAL 234 CAMPAIGNS TO CLASSIFY TRANSIT WORKERS AS A PROTECTED OCCUPATION



PA State Senator Tina Tartaglione spoke about the hazards of operating a bus at the rally

Local 234 is waging a legislative campaign to increase the penalty for assaulting transit workers. Working with PA State Senator Tina Tartaglione, who sponsored the bill, TWU Local 234 gathered support letters from area leaders. Philadelphia Mayor, Police Chief, and City Council signed letters. The Philadelphia District Attorney provided a support letter from the Pennsylvania District Attorneys Association. Senator Tina Tartaglione, the primary sponsor of Senate Bill 236 to put transit workers in a protected class, said, "Every time that you go into that bus, your life is on the line. Let's scream, holler and shout and not give up the fight!" Newly elected State Rep Ed Nielson spoke about his father who was a bus driver. He looks forward to voting for the bill as his first legislative act.

Phila. Councilwoman Cindy Bass spoke about her sister who operates a bus out of Allegheny and has been hit, spit on, and threatened while operating a bus. State Rep Kevin Boyle spoke about his father, a maintenance custodian, who had a gun pulled on him. "TWU members should not have to put up with the violence." Rep. Boyle will also vote for the bill.



Phila. City Councilwoman, Cindy Bass proposed that Council pass Resolution 8 to back the bill. On May 3, President Johnson addressed the Council to inform the representatives about the urgent need to address the assaults and City Council passed the resolution that day. Local 234 will continue the campaign for legislation to protect transit workers.

Join the Campaign Against  
Violence on Public Transit

---

# TWU UNITED CAN NEVER BE DEFEATED





#### TWU Local 234 statement on the Assault of Bus Operator on March 17, 2012

On the afternoon of Saturday March 17, 2012 in southwest Philadelphia, three teenagers assaulted a bus operator and dragged him from the driver's seat. "We can't wait until someone's killed. SEPTA must treat this as an emergency," said John Johnson Jr., President of Transport Workers Union Local 234 after he visited the operator at Mercy Hospital. The assault left the operator with facial lacerations and a broken nose.

The union is calling for three specific actions to make a difference:

- Create a squad drawn from City and SEPTA police to patrol buses on high crime routes and loops
- Ensure that emergency response buttons are in working order at all times and, when activated, get an immediate response
- SEPTA to join the TWU Local 234 Operator and Public Safety Task Force with the power to investigate the issue and make recommendations to SEPTA's Board of Trustees concerning violence on public transportation