

Alvin B. Douglas Retired Business Agent For Local 425 which represented Transit workers in Hartford,CT

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on behalf of Transit Workers in the state of Connecticut.

#### A Dangerous Job

Due to the nature of their employment, which includes handling money, dealing with complaints, and unruly children on school buses, women being sexually assaulted, working alone, working late, and enforcing regulations, transit employees are vulnerable to horrific criminal acts. Transit workers frequently travel in unsafe neighborhoods, dealing with people who do not want to pay fares and children who hurl rocks and snowballs at their vehicles. And they are confronting all of this while trying to safely steer their vehicles through traffic.

#### Transit Workers Should be Treated Differently

The most common argument that we hear in the states in opposition to enhanced penalties in these cases is that laws that make it more of a crime to harm some people than others are undemocratic. However, in most states, legislators have come to understand that when transit workers, especially those individuals who operate vehicles, are assaulted in the course of performing their duties, the safety of every individual on board the vehicle is placed in immediate jeopardy. With mass transit ridership at record levels, more innocent people are at risk each day. In addition, other cars, pedestrians, and bicyclists are put at risk when Transit Work are distracted for any reason, especially when they become the victim of a senseless assaults.

#### Conclusion

Thank you once again for the opportunity to testify today. I would be pleased to provide further information.

# Driver's assailant sought; reward offered

A \$5,000 reward is being offered for information leading to the arrest and conviction of a man who robbed and sexually assaulted a bus driver in West Hartford last week, a Connecticut Transit spokesman says.

Amalgamated Transit Union Local 425 raised the reward money, Stephen Warren, Connecticut Transit director of development, said Wednesday.

Warren said the union plans to publicize the reward in local newspapers next week and that the company will post notices on all Hartford division buses.

West Hartford police Det. Robert V. Casey said the incident oc-

curred Dec. 19 when a male passenger got off and then re-entered the bus on New Park Avenue near the Oakwood Avenue intersection about 11 p.m.

Casey said the man robbed the driver, alone on the bus, of about \$40 in cash and several hundred dollars in checks that belonged to her and also sexually assaulted her.

The driver had several bruises and a black eye, Casey said. She was treated at St. Francis Hospital and Medical Center in Hartford and released, he said.

Anyone with information is asked to call Casey at 523-5203.



March 6, 2009

Mr. Avlin Douglas  
Business Agent, Local 425 (Retired)  
Amalgamated Transit Union  
69 Burnside Avenue  
East Hartford, CT 06108

Dear Alvin:

I understand the Committee on Transportation will be meeting on March 11 to consider Committee Bill No. 6276, "An Act Increasing Fines and Penalties for Certain Offenses Committed Against a Transit Worker in Connecticut." As I must be out of town on business that day, I appreciate your offer to deliver these written comments in support of the proposed legislation to the appropriate members of the General Assembly.

CTTRANSIT employs 569 full-time professional bus operators in our Hartford, New Haven, and Stamford Divisions. These men and women provide an important public service day in and day out in all kinds of weather and traffic conditions. Just as the safety of their passengers is a paramount responsibility of bus operators, we need to ensure that bus operators are protected from assault and other violent crimes while performing their duties.

I recently reviewed operators' reports of on-duty incidents for a one-year period. There were four incidents in which operators were assaulted by passengers. Fortunately, none of the operators was seriously injured, although three did receive medical attention.

We believe even one such incident is one too many. If increasing the fines and penalties for such criminal acts would help prevent even one more assault, why wouldn't we do so?

Thank you for your efforts to enlist support for Committee Bill No. 6276. CTTRANSIT management strongly supports any legislation that will make our employees safer from violent crime while they are on duty.

Sincerely,

David A. Lee  
General Manager



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## Man killed in shooting on bus

NEWARK (AP) — A man was shot to death aboard a New Jersey Transit bus yesterday afternoon by a gunman who then fled down a city street, authorities said.

While it appears that both men got on the bus at the same stop shortly before the shooting occurred around 3:30 p.m., it was not clear what sparked it or how long the two men had been together before the shoot-

ing, said Todd McClendon, a Newark police spokesman.

The bus, which runs between Newark and Perth Amboy, was headed to Elizabeth when the shooting occurred near the intersection of Broad and South streets. McClendon said the victim, whose name was not released, was shot "multiple times," but the type of gun used was not immediately known.

No one else was injured, po-

lice said. About 50 people were aboard the bus, said Penny Bassett Hackett, an NJ Transit spokeswoman.

The shooting was the second within a month on an NJ Transit bus. A 22-year-old man and a 12-year-old girl were wounded when shots were fired on a bus in Trenton on Jan. 28. A 17-year-old male was arrested the next day and charged with attempted murder.





**State laws providing for specific penalties in connection with harming transit and school bus employees**

State	Section	Provision	Penalty
CA	Cal Pen Code 190.25	Murder of a transportation worker.	Life without parole.
CA	Cal Pen Code 212.5	Robbery of a transportation worker.	First degree robbery.
CA	Cal Pen Code 241.3	Assault of transportation worker or passenger.	\$2,000 fine, 1 year in jail, or both.
CA	Cal Pen Code 243.3	Battery of transportation worker or passenger.	\$10,000 fine or 1 year in jail, or both. If injury occurs, up to 3 years prison.
CA	Cal Pen Code 245.2	Assault with deadly weapon on transportation worker.	Up to 5 years prison.
FL	Fla Stat 784.07	Assault of transit employee.	1 <sup>st</sup> degree misdemeanor.
FL	Fla Stat 784.07	Battery of transit employee.	3 <sup>rd</sup> degree felony.
FL	Fla Stat 784.07	Aggravated assault of transit employee.	2 <sup>nd</sup> degree felony.
FL	Fla Stat 784.07	Aggravated battery of transit employee.	1 <sup>st</sup> degree felony.