

INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF TEAMSTERS

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FROM: Rick Middleton, Director, Passenger Transportation Division
RE: Workers' Memorial Day 2021

This past year has meant a loss of someone for many of us — family, friends, neighbors, co-workers. That's why this year's Workers Memorial Day is particularly poignant — every year on April 28 the Teamsters remember all of our members who have sustained injuries, illnesses or even given their lives while on the job. This year we also want to recognize all of our school bus and transit members for the invaluable contributions they have made to their communities in the face of this crisis.

Many school bus and transit workers faced an immediate challenge of how to continue working without risking the health of themselves or their families after the outbreak in North America. School districts throughout the country anguished over how to best protect themselves from a disease that was as rapidly spreading as it was enigmatic when the crisis first began. The Passenger Transportation Division worked with members and local unions to fight for personal protective equipment (PPE), adjustments in work schedules, more flexible leave policies, hero pay and other benefits to counter the risks they were undertaking every day.

At the same time, in many municipalities our members faced layoffs and work reductions. Due in no small part to the political power of the Teamsters, Congress passed expanded unemployment benefits, cash payments, job protections and other measures that prevented many school bus and transit members from bearing the brunt of both economic and public health catastrophes simultaneously. These fights and the resulting victories preserved many of our members' financial security at a time when it was jeopardized.

In spite of our best efforts, we still lost Teamster brothers and sisters to the pandemic. It has taken our friends, family and other loved ones from us indiscriminately. I hope that it will be of comfort to those who are feeling this loss to remember those who are no longer with us as dedicated workers, family members and invaluable assets to their communities. For these reasons and many more they will never be forgotten.

School bus and transit Teamsters have spent the past year demonstrating the resolve, bravery and solidarity that embodies the values of our union by performing work that is essential to the American way of life. I know we will continue to embody these values. Together, we will recover from this pandemic and come back stronger than ever before.

The IBT has developed a variety of resources for Workers' Memorial Day activities at your local union and workplace. For more information, go to <http://ibt.io/2021WMD>.