**Speak Out Now! at AC Transit 11/2/2020**

**The Upcoming Budget Crisis**

For now, AC Transit has skirted the budget crisis. But what will happen by the beginning of next summer? BART is already openly discussing ending weekend service, closing stations, and encouraging early retirement. These are flashing red lights we have to pay attention to!

We would not be working now if it wasn’t for the emergency funding from the CARES Act. Even if another bailout comes it will more than likely not be enough. Cuts to service and our livelihoods will be called into question. We know the contract re-opener is approaching, are we expecting a pay raise? The District will say, “think again”, and they will likely have the financial numbers to back them up. But a pay raise will be the least of our concerns next year.

If we want to defend our jobs and the service our communities need we will have to join with everyone who is facing the same cuts. This is where we will have the power to resist and defend ourselves.

**The Dollar Dilemma**

So, AC decided to start collecting cash fares for riding the bus again. While it ‘might’ help a little with the budget, it also puts passengers back in the front door. So, they put a ‘shield ‘ in to protect us, that reflects like the sun on water! And they locked our windows, to keep the air “circulating” thru extra thick filters. If only ‘they could be the ones out here driving the bus!

**The YOUnion**

Right now there is a lot of focus on the union election. It’s important to understand what the candidates are calling for so we know what our vote means. But very soon, the election will be over and some people will be elected into office.

When this happens, do we step back and say “let them take care of things” or do we step up and get involved? Regardless of who gets elected, we are still confronting big challenges. Even the best union officers cannot confront these issues alone. This means we have to all come together, across divisions and across classifications. It’s time to put the “YOU” back into the union!

**Detroit Drivers Lead By Example**

In September, a bus driver in Detroit faced an incident that is unfortunately familiar. After reminding a passenger to wear his mask, the passenger crossed the COVID barrier and assaulted the driver. Instead of being a target, he defended himself. And Management tried to suspend the driver!

When other drivers heard about the discipline, they were furious. This came in the context of an uptick of assaults on operators. They decided that enough was enough and on October 2nd, 288 operators carried out a wildcat work stoppage that lasted for three days. They ended up negotiating a memorandum of understanding with the mayor that included more safety supports.

If Detroit drivers can support each other, we certainly can too!

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Join our next Online Town Hall:
**“The Elections are Over, But the Problems Remain”**

Our power to confront our problems was never in the ballot box, but in our collective strength when we stand together.

**Saturday Nov 14th 4pm**

Visit [www.SpeakOutSocialists.org](http://www.SpeakOutSocialists.org) for details

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**The New And Improved COVID Shield**