



Amalgamated Transit Union Canada

This senseless tragedy should have never taken place. For years the ATU has been fighting for greater protections for our members. And yet here we stand. Mourning the loss of our Brother Irvine Fraser.

It is unacceptable for any worker to have to go to work in fear that they may be assaulted or never return home to the ones they love.

And yet 5 Transit Operators are assaulted across Canada every day.

Our employers tell us that the abuse comes with the Job. ATU Canada is here to say "NO IT DOES NOT". It is easy for someone that sits behind a desk and doesn't do the job to say something so ridiculous.

For a supervisor to ask an operator what they could have done differently to prevent being spat on is shameful. I ask them how would you go home and explain to your family that someone spat on you today or assaulted you while in the course of your duties. Or even worst have someone tell them that you had been murdered at work today.

It is time the employers stop putting a dollar amount on humanity. Computer generated run times designed to keep a driver in the seat for longer periods of time is actually hurting the very industry we all want to see get better.

Designing unrealistic bus running times has to stop. Our passengers are missing connections and their frustration is being transferred to the Operators.

Our Operators are told to drive for longer durations and do not have acceptable time to use the restroom or eat. This is causing them to develop various health issues. The career they love is slowly killing them because the Corporations will be able to save money.

Back in 2015 Bill S221 became law. It states that in the event a transit operator is assaulted while performing their duties, a stricter sentence will be imposed upon the assailant. Up to 10 years for an indictable offence or 18 months on a summary conviction. The change in the law has had no effect on the number of assaults on bus drivers that occur on a daily basis across Canada.

Our legal system has failed us because lawyers are permitted to plea bargain lesser sentences and the courts are permitting this to happen. ATU Canada is demanding that you uphold this law. The loss of one life is too many.

The ATU's position is that the logical next step is structural changes to the buses. Specifically the operator workstation, to ensure that these incidents don't happen in the first place. Commercial pilots and train operators are provided with enclosed workstations and yet bus operators are left out in the open susceptible to heinous attacks.

Let's not have Brother Fraser's murder be in vain. Let ensure the safety of all transit employees across Canada and the United States. Implement these changes and stop these heinous assaults on Transit Operators.

Stand up and demand that our courts uphold the law. Demand that criminals receive the full measure of the law for their crimes.

Paul Thorp
President
ATU Canada