

Honorable Nathan Fletcher, Chair Metropolitan Transit System  
James R. Mills Building, Board Meeting Room 10<sup>th</sup> Floor  
1255 Imperial Avenue, San Diego CA 92101



**RE: Essential Workers at MTS Deserve Essential Pay**

Chair Fletcher and MTS Board,

My name is Nate Fairman and I proudly represent 260 workers at San Diego Metropolitan Transit System including maintenance workers, mechanics, trolley flaggers and bus servicers. I write you today in solidarity alongside Cesar Buenaventura, President of ATU 1309 and our 525 fellow MTS Union siblings in our call for the agency to acknowledge the risks our combined 785 Union members take each day reporting to work on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic. MTS workers have been deemed essential and while hundreds of thousands of our city residents work remotely or shelter in place our transit workers proudly report to work each day to ensure the rest of the essential workers and first responders have a reliable form of public transit.

As many of you are aware, transit workers across this nation have been infected by COVID-19 at an alarming rate. Concerned members of both of our Local Unions have been reaching out to us about recent exposures, risks, and even worker deaths around the country. 8 NY Transit workers have already died due to COVID-19 (<https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2020/04/essential-workers-deaths-underclass.html>). *Our members are essential, but they are not expendable.* The time is now to recognize the sacrifices MTS employees make, recognize the risks they take, and show them we appreciate our essential workforce at a time where we are producing videos and commercials calling them “heroes”. They are heroes and they deserve to be paid like heroes.

This concept of “hazard pay” has gained mainstream attention, even being proposed as law in both the US Senate (<https://www.forbes.com/sites/terinaallen/2020/04/17/senate-proposal-up-to-25000-pay-raise-for-these-essential-workers/#392887ba7f19>) and House of Representatives (<https://www.democrats.senate.gov/heroes-fund-final>) garnering bi-partisan support. Dozens of companies and public agencies have also recognized their frontline heroes by reaching hazard pay agreements with their unions (AT&T, Vons, City of Donna, City of Augusta, City of Atlanta, State of Maine, PG&E, Rite Aide, Gelson’s etc.) and we call on MTS to do the same for our local heroes.

On behalf of the combined 785 MTS employees, Union members of ATU 1309 and IBEW Local 465, we respectfully request the MTS Board to consider awarding a **10% Essential Worker Differential** to employees represented by ATU and the IBEW retroactive to March 13<sup>th</sup> and effective until Governor Newsom ends the emergency declaration.

In Solidarity,

Nate Fairman  
Business Manager  
IBEW Local Union 465

Cesar Buenaventura  
President  
ATU Local Union 1309

The undersigned elected leaders stand in Solidarity with the Union workers of MTS, support their call for their essential worker differential, and urge the MTS Board of Directors to approve the request of the workers:



Ben Hueso  
CA State Senator  
40<sup>th</sup> Senate District



Mark West  
City Councilmember  
Imperial Beach



Colin Parent  
Executive Director  
Circulate San Diego



Keith Maddox  
Secretary Treasurer  
SD Labor Council



Todd Gloria  
CA Assemblymember  
78<sup>th</sup> Assembly District