



On The Move

March 2, 2020

Official Publication of TWU Local 234

www.twulocal234.net

Driver Faces Rude Awakening for Heroic Deed

One of our union brothers was at work a few weeks ago driving his bus as he is supposed to do. However, he was in for a rude awakening when he discovered how SEPTA would treat him for his heroic actions. A passenger on the bus, armed with a knife, decided that it was OK for him to walk to the front of the vehicle and punch the operator in the face. Fortunately, the driver was able to get out of the seat and defend himself. The passenger and the driver scuffled near the well of the bus. During the scuffle the assailant dropped his knife and the driver was able to get the upper hand.

The operator subdued and maintained control of the assailant until the police arrived, otherwise the assailant would have fled the scene and gotten away with a vicious crime. Indeed, if this union brother did not have military training, this story could have ended much differently. It could have been a tragic situation. Our brother could have been beaten to a pulp or stabbed to death. We thank God that we didn't have to make a call to his family giving them our condolences about the loss of their loved one.

I would love to tell you that this story had a happy ending, but thanks to SEPTA that's not the case. SEPTA detectives in the IG's office decided that our member's life had no value and had our union brother arrested and charged with simple assault, to protect his life.

To add insult to injury, SEPTA fired the union brother him for allegedly using "excessive force." Most disturbing is the fact that his discharge was upheld at the Labor Relation's Step---thereby reinforcing the idea that our members' lives have no value in the minds of SEPTA management. Rest assured, the case has been filed for arbitration and we will do everything possible to get him reinstated with full back pay.

As far as the charge of simple assault is concerned---given the outrageous nature of this case---we plan to hold a fundraiser to help our union brother pay his legal bills. SEPTA's handling of this incident could have a chilling effect on the entire membership. Do we accept SEPTA's theory that our lives are worthless, or do we stand together as one and demand the respect that is due us?

As President of this Union, I say we must stand up and fight. I say we tell the people who are responsible for this travesty to go to HELL!! We deserve a safe working environment and the public deserves a safe riding atmosphere. Make no mistake, if we have to choose between our lives and our jobs we will choose our lives. Brothers and Sisters, this newsletter is an official call to arms for the membership to get prepared to take on the fight for respect and dignity on the job. There will be publications advising the members how we plan to organize around this issue. In the meantime, stay safe, stay tuned and be prepared when the call is made.

We Must and We Will