



For Immediate Release
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Alexandria DASH Operators Win Historic Contract Fight

(Alexandria, Virginia) May 20th, 2019 - After three long days of negotiations, DASH bus operators reached a tentative agreement with management on Saturday for pay increases and a pension. The tentative agreement also includes provisions for a Retirement Health Reimbursement Arrangement (RHRA) that many are excited about. On Wednesday, May 22nd, DASH workers will hold a vote on whether to approve the agreement.

"We've bargained with DASH management since November when the workers first won their vote to unionize. DASH workers were discouraged by being some of the lowest paid bus operators in the region. We're proud to say that we've been able to reach a tentative agreement that will resolve many of the problems voiced by the operators" said Local 689 President Raymond Jackson.

Past pay scales for DASH maxed out operator salaries at \$3 to \$10 per hour less than WMATA operators. DASH operators took 20 years to reach the top of the hourly pay scale, rather than the 7 years to reach the max pay within the WMATA system. DASH also insultingly offered \$1,500/month rent stipends to temporary hires, but would not offer these same benefits to their existing workers. At the time, President Jackson called the stipend an "admission by DASH that they don't pay their own employees enough to live in the community they serve." These factors all contributed to DASH having a high turnover rate among operators. DASH even spent over \$40,000 on union busting legal counsel to fight the right of their workers to organize.

Contract negotiations began in January but required the support of the whole community and a unanimous strike vote to make DASH support its workers. "This strike vote sends a loud and clear message to DASH and the City of Alexandria that these drivers demand to be paid fairly and treated with respect and dignity," said Local 689 President Raymond Jackson. "Our goal as a union is to right a lot of really historical wrongs here with these workers and to get them on the path to the future," said Chris Townsend, Director of Field Mobilization for ATU International.

"Because of this union contract more of these workers will actually be able to live in the community that they serve," added ATU Local 689 President and Business Agent Raymond Jackson. Despite many days at the table and several union busting attempts, workers stuck together and fought to improve their situation. ATU Local 689 looks forward to representing these brave workers and also looks forward to a very conducive and progressive relationship with DASH Management.

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Amalgamated Transit Union Local 689 is comprised of more than 13,000 members performing occupations within the many skilled transportation crafts for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), MetroAccess, and the DC Streetcar. A member of the Amalgamated Transit Union (AFL-CIO/CLC), the largest labor organization representing transit workers in the United States and Canada, Local 689 was established on January 19, 1916. For more information please visit our website at atulocal689.org.