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Press Release

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IMMEDIATE

NYCT, TWU Issue Proposals For Increased Bus Operator Safety

Policy Changes Come in Wake of Murder of Bus Operator Edwin Thomas

NEW YORK—New York City Transit (NYCT) and Transport Workers Union Local 100 (TWU) today released several proposals to increase bus operator safety in the wake of the murder of Edwin Thomas and a rash of bus operator assaults earlier this month. The proposals are the product of the joint management-union Bus Operator Action Committee (BOAC).

Among the new initiatives is the development of a bus operator compartment partition that will physically separate bus drivers from passengers. The partitions will be tested in a pilot program at the Flatbush Depot, where Bus Operator Thomas worked. Partitions are being used or tested in the following cities:

- Chicago, IL (600 in-service; 488 additional being purchased)
- Washington, DC (three test buses)
- Milwaukee, WI
- Baltimore, MD (40 test buses)

"A significant part of Edwin Thomas' legacy must be a major reduction in the number of assaults on bus operators," said Howard H. Roberts Jr., NYC Transit President. "In order to create that legacy we are working with the TWU to explore any and every idea that will provide our bus operators with the safest working environment possible."

"TWU has been pushing for this protection for a long time and we're glad to see it come," said TWU Local 100 President Roger Toussaint. "Bus operators are the most-often assaulted employees at the MTA. Through these initial changes – and others we will work towards – we hope to drastically reduce those numbers."

In addition to the pilot program for partitions, NYCT and TWU Local 100 will together consider whether modifications in fare policy might reduce the potential for assaults. Also under consideration is introducing automated passenger communication on buses, eliminating the requirement for bus operators to initiate potentially confrontational conversations with passengers who may have evaded the farebox.

Moreover, NYCT and TWU Local 100 are set to overhaul training procedures for bus operators in order to minimize passenger confrontation. Operators who work on routes with high rates of assaults will receive priority training. NYCT is also set to install larger "Bus Operator Assault Felony" stickers, which convey that it is a Felony in New York State to assault a bus operator.