



STATE OF INDIANA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

THIRD FLOOR STATE HOUSE
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA 46204

CHERRISH S. PRYOR
200 West Washington Street
Indianapolis, IN 46204

COMMITTEES:
WAYS AND MEANS
LOCAL GOVERNMENT

April 28, 2020

The Honorable Eric Holcomb
200 West Washington Street
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

Dear Governor Holcomb,

Thank you for your response to my April 9th letter regarding essential workers and DOC staff and offenders. I especially appreciate the thorough response from DOC and the opportunity to participate in upcoming DOC COVID-19 status update meetings.

However, in light of reporting by Newsweek and the Indianapolis Recorder, I ask you to reconsider the state's approach to mitigating the spread of the virus within DOC facilities and the communities where they are located. Reports that 92% of offenders in one facility tested positive for COVID-19 underscore Dr. Box's statement that transmission can occur rapidly in correctional facilities.

Additionally, such a jarring statistic warrants that we revisit DOC's testing approach. DOC should implement testing of all staff and offenders to provide wardens, other DOC officials, and public health officials with the requisite information to manage the virus within facilities. DOC cannot effectively safeguard the health of everyone within these facilities without full data. As I asserted in my prior letter, testing and imposing distancing once an inmate displays symptoms are too late.

I ask you to reconsider the actions that other states have taken to protect their correctional staff and to impose social distancing within facilities. Implementing a more complete set of protocols that is preventative, rather than reactive, will make all the difference in promoting the health and well-being of staff, offenders, and the communities that house the facilities.

Lastly, as we move closer to reopening our state, I think clear guidelines need to be set for essential workers beyond reliance on the CDC. This includes getting recommendations from associations and unions that best know the needs of those who are putting their lives on the line. One such industry includes public transportation workers across the state. It is challenging for these industries to get access to PPE on a regular basis. I urge you to include all essential workers in the PPE supply chain.

The attached Amalgamated Transit Union letter clearly lays out recommendations that should be required and implemented to protect riders, drivers, and the public. A few of the recommendations include mandating face masks for riders on transit systems and in other confined locations, in addition to installing a glass barrier between drivers and riders. Due to continuous exposure to the public, the state must take a leadership role in protecting people who

put their lives on the line for us daily. They work so we can stay home. Let's protect them so they can go home healthy to their families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cherrish S. Pryor". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized initial "C".

Cherrish S. Pryor, Democratic Floor Leader
State Representative
House District 94

Cc: Dr. Kristina Box, Indiana State Department of Health
Robert E. Carter, Indiana Department of Correction
Jeff Rosenberg, Amalgamated Transit Union

Attachment: ATU Letter to Governors



April 15, 2020

The Honorable Larry Hogan, Chairman
National Governors Association
State Capitol
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Andrew Cuomo, Vice Chairman
National Governor's Association
State Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Hogan and Governor Cuomo:

We fully support your plan to create a consortium through the National Governors Association (NGA) to supply the medical equipment and personal protective equipment (PPE) needed to fight the coronavirus pandemic, and are writing to urge you to **include public transit systems in the PPE supply chain**. In addition, we urge the nation's governors to require transit systems to **deny service to any patron who is not wearing a face mask** or face cover, consistent with CDC guidelines.

It has become quite clear our federal government alone cannot adequately address the lack of PPE and other vital public health infrastructure. The depleted Strategic National Stockpile and an overwhelmed Federal Emergency Management Agency have repeatedly failed to get states what they need to keep their citizens healthy. Your initiative to band together among the nation's governors to procure supplies yourselves gives us a fighting chance of combating this pandemic.

Just as Maryland and New York are bidding against other states for ventilators and PPE for health care workers, our employers – the nation's transit systems – are competing against each other for masks, gloves, goggles, and cleaning supplies to keep our members and passengers safe. As a result, many of our members are operating public transit without any PPE. They are risking their lives daily.

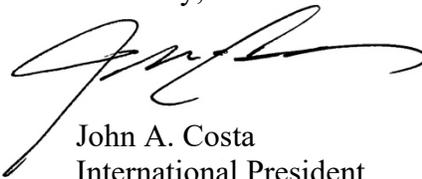
In many cities, transit agencies have been unwilling or unable to institute social distancing and other recommendations from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Buses and trains are still quite crowded, and infected passengers are unknowingly spreading the virus to fellow riders and operators alike. Nationwide, thousands of transit workers have been infected and dozens have died. Our members are getting sick at a rate that is much higher than the general population due to the ongoing shortage of PPEs.

Therefore, as you form this consortium of states to obtain PPE, we plead with you to create a structure that would allow the nation's transit systems to be part of the supply chain along with health professionals and other first responders.

Moreover, we applaud New York and Maryland for **mandating** that all people wear face coverings when riding on public transportation in order to safeguard against spreading COVID-19. This is a common sense measure that we have been calling for since the beginning of the pandemic. Governor Murphy in New Jersey signed a similar executive order last week, which also requires transit systems to supply their workers with gloves and face coverings. While the Federal Transit Administration, consistent with new CDC guidance, has recently been recommending masks for transit systems, the agency has made it clear that their suggestion is voluntary. Your mandatory approach shows leadership, and it will save lives. We urge you to push this out to all NGA members.

We stand ready to assist in any way. Feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,



John A. Costa
International President
Amalgamated Transit Union



John Samuelsen
International President
Transport Workers Union

c: All NGA Members