



Amalgamated Transit Union

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Office of the International President

September 13, 2021

Via First-Class Mail

Flozell Daniels Jr.
Chairman

Mark Raymond Jr.
Vice-Chairman

Laura Bryan
Commissioner

Fred Neal Jr.
Commissioner

RTA Board of Commissioners
2817 Canal Street
New Orleans, LA 70119-6301

Mostofa Sarwar
Commissioner

Walter Tillery
Commissioner

Arthur Walton
Commissioner

Sharon Wegner
Commissioner

Re: RTA Termination of Valerie Jefferson and Repudiation of
Hurricane Pay Commitments

Dear Chairman Daniels, Vice-Chairman Raymond, and Commissioners Bryan, Neal, Sarwar, Tillery, Walton and Wegner:

I am writing to ask that the RTA Board of Commissioners immediately reverse the retaliatory termination of Valerie Jefferson, that the RTA provide its bus operators with the hurricane pay they were promised, and that you demand that RTA CEO Alex Wiggins resign.

As you are aware, Hurricane Ida and its aftermath were challenging for the RTA and the communities it serves. They were challenging, also, for RTA bus operators who had their own family emergencies they put on hold as they faced new dangers on their routes. At great sacrifice to their families, and despite the difficulties they faced on the job, ATU Local 1560 members at RTA delivered the vital transit and relief services that the RTA's communities needed.

These vital services were delivered because the RTA and ATU Local 1560 were able to reach a written agreement addressing bus operator schedules and compensation during the period of emergency. Although the agreement was invaluable in ensuring that the RTA met its mission, by September 8, 2021, management was indicating that it might not honor its written commitments under the agreement.

Ms. Jefferson, an RTA bus operator who was acting in her capacity as the ATU Local 1560 President/Business Agent, met with Mr. Wiggins to inquire into the situation. Ms. Jefferson made clear that she and the local union would insist that the RTA meet its obligations in the face of management's move to renege on its promises. Before the day was over, Mr. Wiggins violated

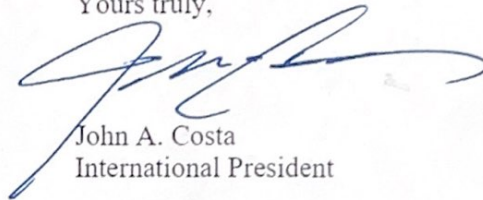
Ms. Jefferson's First Amendment rights by terminating her in retaliation for speaking out for her members. Unfortunately, this conduct is not out of character for Mr. Wiggins. At LA Metro, he was investigated and found to have engaged in abusive and retaliatory behavior while he was there.

The ATU cannot allow a conscientious local union officer such as Ms. Jefferson to be terminated for engaging in Constitutionally protected speech on behalf of her members. For that reason, the ATU is now preparing a complaint to be filed in U.S. District Court to vindicate her rights.

In the meantime, we demand that Ms. Jefferson be returned to work immediately, that the RTA live up to its agreement on wages during Hurricane Ida, and that you demand the resignation of Mr. Wiggins.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'John A. Costa', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

John A. Costa
International President

js/2

c: Curtis Howard, International Vice President, ATU
Valerie Jefferson, President/Business Agent, ATU Local 1560
(above via email)