

KEEP TRAFFIC IN NYPD – 6/24 Press Release

CWA, AFSCME Launch Campaign to Keep Traffic Enforcement in NYPD

Locals Urge Council, Mayor Not to Harm Thousands of Black, Immigrant and Latinx Traffic Enforcement Agents In A “Cosmetic” Budget Shift

Leading Transportation Advocacy Organization Announces Support Before Agents Were in NYPD, Violence Against Them Was Rampant

Local unions representing nearly 3500 Traffic Enforcement workers and tow truck drivers, many of whom are Black and Latinx, launched a petition and phone calling campaign to make sure that the Council and Mayor do not move Traffic Enforcement out of the NYPD. The organizations and their members urged the Council and Mayor to focus on real NYPD reform in the wake of Black Lives Matter protests rather than cosmetic budget shifts.

“We are already underpaid and treated with disrespect,” **said Agent Thomas Monroe, a member of CWA Local 1182.** “Our members suffer an average of 100 physical assaults every year. If they put us back in DOT, the situation will only get worse, and agents will be in greater danger than ever.”

When traffic enforcement workers were part of the DOT, assaults were rampant. Physical attacks, including broken limbs, peaked in the early 1990s with approximately 600 a year.

“During the worst days of the Covid-19 pandemic, we were considered First Responders,” **added Rebecca Greene, a leader in CWA Local 1181.** “We were always on call and always in the street, doing our job. Now they want to demote us back to being so-called ‘Brownies’ in the DOT, subject to hundreds of attacks? That’s not right. We deserve better than that.”

The unions launched a petition that already has over 1000 signatures and have made hundreds of calls to key Councilmembers. Advocacy groups like Transportation Alternatives have recently joined the call to make sure calls for NYPD reform in the wake of Black Lives Matter do not end up hurting Traffic Enforcement Agents, Supervisors and Drivers.

“We believe that TEAs have an important role to play in making the streets of NYC better and safer and view them as part of the solution, not the problem,” **said Transportation Alternatives in a statement.** “We remain in connection with our allies at TEA’s union, and have removed any recommendations concerning them in our revised report.”

Not only are agents, supervisors and drivers adamantly opposed to leaving the NYPD, the unions argue that such a shift does not represent the real reform of the police department demanded by recent Black Lives Matter demonstrations, reforms that are supported by the unions. “This is just cosmetic budget cutting,” **said Ricky Morrison, Temporary Administrator of Local 1182.** “You’re just shifting costs around on a budget sheet without changing anything.” CWA members joined a nationwide 8:46 work stoppage by the union on June 11th in commemoration of George Floyd.

About the Campaign and Traffic Enforcement Agents

The campaign is spearheaded by two Locals (1181 and 1182) of the Communications Workers of America representing 3,250 Traffic Enforcement Agents and Supervisors, as well as AFSCME Local 983, which represents an additional 275 tow truck drivers. Over 95% of the Traffic Enforcement Agents are Black and brown—primarily immigrants from Bangladesh and Africa, and Latinx and African-Americans. Their salaries start at just over \$41,000 and top out at \$50,000 after 10 years on the job; supervisors make about \$10,000 more.