

AMALGAMATED TRANSIT UNION LOCAL 689

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Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 689 key dates:

1916: Founded as a streetcar union in Washington, DC
1917: First labor agreement after a brief strike
1955: Two month strike after assets of Capital Transit are gutted by owner who refuses to pay wage increases
1962: Last streetcar service is converted to buses
1967: WMATA Compact approved by states and federal government
1973: Four private bus companies in DC region acquired by WMATA; integrated regional bus service begins
1976: First Metrorail service begins

Current bargaining unit:

ATU Local 689 represents about 7,800 employees of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, including bus and rail employees encompassing bus operators, rail operators, station managers, bus maintenance workers, rail car maintenance workers, physical plant maintenance workers, track & wayside workers and clerical employees.

Other bargaining units at WMATA: Transit police unit, Transit security guards unit, professional & technical unit and Landover bus garage unit which are represented by other unions.

Primary Activities:

The union was formed to better the wages, benefits and working conditions of employees in the transit industry. Today this involves negotiating or representing in arbitration proceedings the bargaining unit for new labor agreements to replace expiring agreements, investigating and processing individual employee grievances in an attempt to settle them with the management, represent employees in arbitration proceedings should the membership vote to do so or drop grievances that the membership deems without merit. The union also attempts to resolve safety issues with the management. The union is also active in promoting more efficient transit throughout the region, lobbying for increased transit funding and for promoting new transit options throughout the region

Governing structure:

All permanent positions provided for in the union's bylaws are elected by the membership, with elections scheduled every three years. These include five officers (President, Secretary-Treasurer, Recording Secretary, 1st Vice President, and 2nd Vice President), an additional 20 part-time executive board members and additional shop stewards throughout the system. The union membership meetings consist of one meeting per month in the evening followed by a continuation meeting the following morning. All actions of the union officers and executive board must ultimately be authorized or approved by a vote of the union membership at an official meeting or through a referendum vote.

Some recent “oversight” activities:

- Testifying before House Oversight Committee on WMATA financing
 - Testifying before House Oversight Committee on WMATA safety
 - Publicizing specific recommendations for safety or financial matters through the media
 - Meeting with elected officials on issues of concern
 - Participating in WMATA budget forums and offering suggestions on improving safety, customer service and service efficiencies
 - Testifying at WMATA public hearings
 - Testifying at local jurisdictions public hearings on transit and other matters
 - Participation in WMATA sponsored safety meetings
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