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Transit Workers Return to Capitol to Advocate for “United We Move” Bill

The bill outlines key reforms to avoid the looming \$770 million fiscal cliff for Northeastern Illinois regional public transit system.

(Springfield, Ill.) – Transit workers returned to Springfield today to rally behind the “United We Move” bill, HB2963/SB1938, which would create a path to safer, smarter, more reliable public transit for Northeastern Illinois. The legislation prioritizes safety and coordination to achieve a faster and more reliable experience for riders, ensures secure transit operations, and promotes fiscal accountability.

“I am honored to join my colleagues and transit workers as we re-affirm our commitment to providing a world-class public transit system that is safe, reliable, accessible, and integrated for our residents,” said **State Senator Ram Villivalam (D-Chicago)**. “I look forward to continuing discussions on the service, governance and funding of our public transit system as it is such an integral part of our local economy.”

“We come to work every day and give our all to make sure that economic engine of Chicago keeps moving. We need reform to keep transit safe, affordable and viable for the people of Chicago and our surrounding region,” said **ATU Local 241 President Keith Hill**.

Building on the conversations had and connections made during a lobby day in Springfield on March 5, transit workers shared public transit’s importance to the communities they serve, the entire state’s economy and urged legislators to support HB2963/SB1938. The bill’s sponsors, Senate Transportation Committee Chair Ram Villivalam and Labor & Commerce Committee Chair State Rep Marcus Evans, have supported the bill and are committed to ensuring that working- and middle-class families in have an integrated public transit system that connects them to economic opportunities, services and each other for decades to come.

“We need reform. We can’t settle for the transit system we have, we must push for the transit system we need,” said **House Leader Marcus Evans (D-Chicago)**.

“We come across individuals who are mentally unstable, under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or simply struggling with life issues and most of the time they dump those problems on us. We’re not trained or equipped to handle these situations, yet we’re expected to, day in and day out,” said **CTA Customer Service Representative and ATU Local 308 member Cassie Collins**. “A dedicated transit police force is not just a want, it’s a necessity. We need to feel protected as we do our jobs, for our own wellbeing and for the wellbeing of the people who rely on us.”

“Transit allows people the opportunity to access a wide range of jobs,” said **Metra Train Conductor and SMART-TD Local 653 member Orlando Rojas**. “It allows employers to choose from a wider pool of jobseekers. It makes world renowned education and healthcare accessible to those for whom it might otherwise not be an option. It would mean layoffs and loss of solidly middle class jobs, not only for transit riders, but for transit workers like myself, and the money and economic activity we take back to our communities. Other taxpayers would be left to share a higher tax burden of having less jobs and access to employment.”

The **Labor Alliance for Public Transit** is made up of over thirty local unions working in tandem to enhance the safety and efficiency of transportation options across Illinois. The coalition has also created a webpage to share key resources to ensure workers and riders have a strong voice in strengthening the future of Illinois’ public transportation networks. For more information, visit unitedwemoveil.org.

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