



AMALGAMATED TRANSIT UNION

LOCAL 998 • AFFILIATED WITH AFL-CIO

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PLEASE POST

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As you know, Wisconsin is about to become the Nation's 25th Right to Work State. What it means to public transportation, and how Section 13(c) of the Federal Transit Act pertains to us is the subject of debate. This section (13c) is administered by both the Department of Labor and the U.S. Department of Transportation, and is actually part of a federal certification process for funding. Summing it up, if transportation agencies, public or private, request federal funding for public mass transit, it must agree to a list of protective arrangements before Federal Funds or grants are disbursed.. These arrangements include, but are not limited to, not only the PRESERVATION of rights, privileges, and benefits under existing collective bargaining agreements, but the CONTINUATION of those collective bargaining rights. The Department of Labor is charged with ensuring that these protective conditions are in place before the certification of funds is complete and funds are granted. Violations of 13(c) carry heavy fines which could cost agencies thousands of dollars per employee.

There have been court challenges over the years in which state and federal courts have upheld 13(c). However, agencies that can afford to do without Federal Funding, would not be subject to the FTA act. Milwaukee County Transit System currently receives about \$26,000,000.00 annually (17% of operating budget) from the Federal Agencies. The State currently receives 1.7 Billion dollars in Federal Funding in its 7.1 Billion dollar budget. Of the entire State budget, 2.1 Billion dollars goes to local governments. This money is used for local road maintenance, harbors and bridges, railroads, airports, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and public transit.

This leads us to the question of how much money would the state forfeit if they reject federal funds for public transit in order to bypass 13(c) and diminish our collective bargaining rights? I do not have a dollar figure, but my guess is it would be substantial. I do not think they will turn money down, but remember, Scott Walker turned down over \$800 million in high speed rail money that would have created thousands of construction jobs, not to mention the jobs it would have created to run that system. I hope the Republicans in Madison learned by that mistake and are not only willing to create jobs, but ensure good paying, family supporting jobs stay in this State.

As this Union moves forward on contract negotiations, we will also be keeping an eye on what develops in Madison. We will keep you informed.

Tom Stawicki
Legislative Director ATU998