



# *On The Move*

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## **TWU, LOCAL 234**

# **STRIKE AUTHORIZATION VOTE**

**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2023**

**11:00 A.M.**

*Don't worry. You can still see the game.*

**SHEETMETAL WORKERS UNION HALL**

**S. Christopher Columbus Blvd.**

*There's plenty of parking.*

*We Can and We Will*

# SEPTA turns its back on public and employee safety, once again

- SEPTA recently announced a so-called “safety emergency,” requiring all Authority employees to attend a safety training program, even though the program has caused disruptions to transit service.

- The Federal Transit Administration recently sent a delegation of investigators to evaluate SEPTA’s safety policies and practices following a slew of very public bus accidents over the summer. During the “emergency” safety sessions, our members are being told that SEPTA considers “safety more important than service or adhering to the schedule.”

At the time the training sessions were announced, the Union noted that *in practice* both transportation and maintenance managers consider productivity and the schedule far more important than employee and public safety. We based this statement on years of experience dealing with a blind eye to our members’ safety concerns. Now, we have additional evidence that SEPTA likes to talk the talk, but rarely walks the walk.

Over the past year, the Union and the Authority have been working to address safety and security issues through the federally mandated joint safety committee process. As a result, we came to an agreement to establish a joint Accident Reduction Program, involving six Accident Reduction Specialists appointed by the Union and six named by the Authority, to work in teams under the direction of the co-chairs of the Joint Health and Safety Committee for the purpose of enhancing safety and security on the job and for those who ride the system.

## Playing Games with Safety

Unfortunately, SEPTA’s labor relations bosses recently put the kibosh on the program in an attempt to gain an advantage in the negotiations over a new contract. **SEPTA’s willingness to use such tactics does not bode well for getting a new agreement without a strike.**

SEPTA knows that the Accident Reduction Program is important to the Union and its members. So the Authority is hoping that by putting the brakes on the program they can get their way at the bargaining table. In order to appreciate just how screwed up this is, it is important to realize that **the Accident Reduction Program has nothing to do with contract negotiations.** This program is the product of the federal infrastructure legislation, which among other things promotes transit safety and security initiatives.

Indeed, the Union and the Authority’s **operating managers** went to great lengths to ensure that this safety program would be undertaken separate-and-apart from negotiating a new contract. Yet, SEPTA’s labor relations bosses decided to have safety take a back seat to collective bargaining and instructed SEPTA’s operating managers to toe the line. Hopefully, the FTA will take notice of where SEPTA’s priorities truly lie and use its enforcement powers to bring SEPTA’s safety policies and practices into line with the Authority’s hollow rhetoric.