



# AMALGAMATED TRANSIT UNION CANADIAN COUNCIL SYNDICAT UNI DU TRANSPORT CONSEIL CANADIEN

*For Immediate Release*

## **Bill S-221 to Protect Transit Operators Soon to become Law**

**Etobicoke, Ontario (February 16, 2015)** – ATU Canada’s members applaud the unanimous passing at Third Reading of Bill S-221 in the House of Commons today.

Bill S-221 will amend the Criminal Code to make it an aggravating circumstance that the judge must consider if the victim of an assault is a public transit operator, which is defined to include drivers of not just city and inter city buses and surface rail, but also school buses, taxis, ferries and subways.

“The passage of this bill is the culmination of years of hard work by the ATU. They deserve a lot of credit for bringing this issue to the attention of Parliamentarians and pushing hard in support of this legislation,” said Senator Bob Runciman, who introduced Bill S-221.

The Bill, which was introduced in the Senate on May 8, 2014 by Senator Runciman, was introduced in to the House of Commons on September 26 by Conservative MP Corneliu Chisu (Pickering—Scarborough East). “We are grateful to Senator Runciman who introduced this Bill in the Senate and to Mr. Chisu who agreed to sponsor this Bill in the House of Commons,” said Mike Mahar, Director of the Amalgamated Transit Union Canadian Council (ATU Canada). “I am very pleased that Bill S-221 has passed Third Reading with all party support and will soon become law and I would like to thank Senator Runciman for his hard work in making this Bill a reality.”

“This piece of legislation will enable judges to dole out tougher sentences to those that seek to harm public transit operators while carrying out their duties. Not only does it protect the transit operators at their place of work, but also the public who place their trust and lives in the hands of our transit operators each and every day,” said Corneliu Chisu, MP.

“The passage of such a Bill has been a priority of ATU Canada for close to a decade as each year over 2,000 of our members have been the victims of life altering and career ending assaults,” said Mahar. “The impact on their families and industry as a whole is exacerbated by the light sentences the assailants have received in the past. When this Bill becomes law both the public and operators will feel safer, and law enforcement will have the tools they need to impose tougher sentences.”

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