

US - NEW YORK - Roger Toussaint, President of the Transport Workers Union Local 100, explains why MTA workers went on strike

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Dec. 20 - [TWU Local 100](#) - With a one billion dollar surplus contract between the MTA and Transport Workers Union Local 100 should have been a no brainier. Sadly that has not been the case.

Our contract expired midnight on Thursday. In an attempt to save Mass Transit an in deference to our riders, we postponed our deadline and attempted to continue talking to the MTA.

From the beginning, the MTA approached these negotiations in bad faith, demanding arbitration before even trying to resolve the contract. Hours before contract expiration, the MTA got rid of its one billion dollar surplus — a surplus which we believe continues to be understated by some one hundred million dollars.

The MTA knew that reducing health and pension standards at the authority would be unacceptable to our union. They knew there was no good economic reason for their hard line on this issue - not with a billion dollar surplus. They went ahead anyway, supported by the Bloomberg administration which wants to overrun Municipal Labor Unions and all City workers with down pressed wages and gutted health benefits and pension plans.

This has been combined with continued attempts by the MTA, joined by the Governor and the Mayor, to intimidate and threaten our members and their families.

This is a fight over whether hard work will be rewarded with a decent retirement — over the erosion or eventual elimination of health benefit coverage for working people. And it is a fight over dignity and respect on the job. A concept that is very alien to the MTA. Transit workers are tired at being under appreciated and disrespected.

The Local 100 Executive Board has voted overwhelmingly to extend strike action to all MTA properties effective immediately.

All Local 100 representatives and shop stewards are directed to report to their assigned strike locations picket lines or facility nearest you immediately.

To our riders, we ask for your understanding forbearance. We stood with you to keep token booths open, to keep conductors on the train and oppose fare hikes. We now ask that you stand with us. We did not want a strike. Evidently the MTA, governor and the Mayor did.

We call on all good will New Yorkers, the Labor Community, and all working people to recognize that our fight is their fight, and to rally in our support with solidarity activities and events. And to show the MTA that TWU does not stand alone.