

To whom it may concern,

My name is John St Clair. I have been a bus operator with Trimet in Portland for almost 17 years. I currently work out of the Merlo facility in Beaverton as an extra board operator and therefore have exposure to all different types of bus runs and routes in various situations.

While I am fortunate enough to have never been physically assaulted, the possibility of this happening is a reality every transit operator must cope with. It is a reality that affects how we do our jobs and how we relate to the riding public at large.

When I started as a transit worker in 2000, our area was a mid size regional transit district that seemed to be coping with the growth at that time. Since then we've had unprecedented growth in the area that has put a burden on public transportation such as gridlock that did not exist before which in turn has created an impatient driving/riding public. Transit schedules are impossible to maintain at times, due to the congestion, and therefore a disservice to the people depending on us to get them somewhere. The added pressure of this reality not to mention increase government regulation after 911 and other factors put the front line operator at a distinct disadvantage of personal safety. Current law, to my knowledge, has not changed to reflect these needs. When a transit worker is assaulted (and I would include verbal assault) it not only impacts them but their passengers directly, and other busses/trains on that line due to operators being pulled out of service due a personal attack.

Therefore the ripple effect of violence to a transit worker impacts more than just that person.

Please consider the welfare of these valiant transit workers who may have even played a part in getting people here today.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

John St Clair