

Letter from a school bus driver

25 January 2013

The WSWS received the following letter in response to “Why the New York Times backs Bloomberg’s assault on school bus drivers”

I am a single mother and a NYC school bus driver for 13 years. I am *so* frustrated that the news is not reporting the workers’ side of the story. I will try to keep this as short as possible with the facts from our side.

1. Mayor Doomberg said, and I quote, “We are not employing these bus drivers. They’re employed by private companies.” Ok, but *who* hires the contractors to do the NYC BOE [Board of Education] runs? The City! So I’m confused, if the Board of Ed is run by the City and the BOE has the authority for hiring/firing, certifying/decertifying all drivers/matrons, then why doesn’t the City have the authority to negotiate putting the EPP [Employee Protection Provision] in our contract? We go to them to get fingerprinted, background checks, to get our photo ID card and for hearings. Meaning they are in *highest* control of us being hired/fired from our jobs. So how can someone have the authority to take away our jobs but at the same time have nothing to do with us?

2. We don’t get paid 52 weeks a year. We *only* work 40 weeks out of the year and the other 12 weeks we receive unemployment, the summer is already hard on all of us but this is what we signed up for. But knowing we had job protection!

3. We *do not* receive personal days or sick days. So if we do get sick and are not able to go to work we *do not* get paid.

4. We are all fingerprinted, have background checks, are *all* Board of Ed certified, we take at least eight different safety classes per year, we are required to take random drug tests, plus matrons are all CPR & First Aid certified. With all that we have to do *we* deserve to keep our jobs, keep making a living and *keep the children safe with our experience!*

5. As of January 31st we will no longer have health

insurance! All needed medications for a lot of us will be denied and *that is dangerous!*

6. If you think about it, all the employees who will be out of work will need city, state and federal assistance which could and/or would include ... unemployment, food stamps, welfare, Medicaid and, for some, housing. For the ones who live in public housing now paying higher rent, their rent could go down to \$50-\$100 a month and that’s less money into NYC. Now to me this sounds like a *lot* of money to be dishing out to *thousands* of people. So I am a little confused on how he is trying to budget the taxpayers’ money and our lives! *We are taxpayers!*

7. He claims he cares about the children but he doesn’t even know them, *we do!* We spend five days a week with them and we come to care about them.

8. We drive the children to school during blizzards, hurricanes, Nor’easters, the worst of conditions. Do you think someone with less experience or making minimum wage is going to go out and risk their lives driving in these conditions? I don’t think so!

9. Bloomberg always quotes that it costs \$6,900 per child to bus compared to California that only costs \$3,100. But I’m sure California does not pay the bus contractors for the matrons, the gasoline and the insurance on the buses! This is why the BOE of NY pays so much, they are paying the contractors for all of this! So the money is being spent on all of that, *not our salaries! This egotistical billionaire is destroying the NYC public school education and he is out of control!*

Laura Angelo, bus driver



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact