

Clint Sobratti Testimony in Support of Supplemental Appropriation to FY21 Budget

I'm Clint Sobratti. I'm a RideOn Bus Operator and Transit Coordinator and a shop steward with Local 1994.

Bus operators never stopped working when the pandemic hit. We are one of the few departments in Montgomery County that has stayed operational this whole time. Over the past year, we've shuttled this community to and from work, or wherever they wanted or needed to go, every day, day and night. You have to call the police. You have to call an ambulance. Busses, we don't get called, we show up. We open and close this county. We're on call every day.

We're also at risk every day. Unfortunately, we have had a lot of people who have contracted the virus. The very nature of our job puts us at greater risk because we interact with a wide variety of people. We don't know where they've been or who they've been with. One of our fellow employees was struck down by Covid early in pandemic. This pandemic has touched all of us and will continue to touch all of us until it ends. We can't avoid it.

Now at least, we know a little more about how it spreads. They've installed partitions on the bus to help protect us. But there's the other huge battle we must fight – the battle against the people who refuse to wear masks. We face arguments and belligerence for asking someone to mask up. A couple of us have even been assaulted for telling someone to wear a mask.

It's not too much to ask to give us what we deserve. I don't want your thanks, or to be called a hero. I want us to get the general wage adjustment and other increases we were supposed to get last July. I urge you to pass our increase.

Thank you.