



**FLOOR AMENDMENT STATEMENT:** No

**LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE:** Yes

**VETO MESSAGE:** No

**GOVERNOR'S PRESS RELEASE ON SIGNING:** Yes

**FOLLOWING WERE PRINTED:**

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**REPORTS:** No

**HEARINGS:** No

**NEWSPAPER ARTICLES:** Yes

Matthew Fazelpoor, 'New law boosts paratransit workforce pay during states of emergency', *NJBIZ* (online), 24 Feb2023

CL/JA

P.L. 2023, CHAPTER 14, *approved February 23, 2023*  
Assembly, No. 2857 (*First Reprint*)

1 AN ACT concerning compensation for <sup>1</sup>**[**certain work done for the  
2 New Jersey Transit Corporation during a declared state of  
3 emergency**]** certain paratransit workers during periods of  
4 commercial vehicle travel restrictions<sup>1</sup> and supplementing Title  
5 27 of the Revised Statutes.  
6

7 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State  
8 of New Jersey:  
9

10 1. For each hour of time worked during a <sup>1</sup>**[**state of emergency  
11 declared by the Governor**]** commercial vehicle travel restriction for  
12 inclement weather issued by the Commissioner of Transportation<sup>1</sup>,  
13 the New Jersey Transit Corporation shall ensure that <sup>1</sup>**[**each  
14 member of the corporation’s paratransit staff and each member of  
15 the paratransit staff of a paratransit subcontractor of the corporation  
16 is**]** eligible personnel are<sup>1</sup> paid wages at a rate of not less than 150  
17 percent of the <sup>1</sup>**[**employee’s or**]**<sup>1</sup> individual’s regular hourly wage.  
18 Eligible personnel shall only receive the enhanced compensation  
19 pursuant to this section for hours worked during the actual period of  
20 the commercial vehicle travel restriction, as determined by the  
21 Commissioner of Transportation.<sup>1</sup>

22 For purposes of this section, <sup>1</sup>**[**“paratransit staff” includes, but is  
23 not limited to, drivers, attendants, mechanics, technical support  
24 staff, and any employee covered by a collective bargaining  
25 agreement, who is engaged in the provision of complementary  
26 paratransit service independent of local fixed bus routes under the  
27 provisions of the “Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990” (42  
28 U.S.C. s.12101 et seq.)**]** “eligible personnel” means an operator of  
29 an Access Link paratransit vehicle who is actively engaged in  
30 operating an Access Link paratransit vehicle<sup>1</sup>.  
31

32 2. This act shall take effect immediately.  
33  
34  
35  
36

37 Requires NJT to pay certain persons one-and-a-half times regular  
38 rate for work during period of commercial vehicle travel restriction  
39 issued by DOT.

**EXPLANATION** – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **[**thus**]** in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:

<sup>1</sup>Assembly ATR committee amendments adopted June 9, 2022.

# ASSEMBLY, No. 2857

## STATE OF NEW JERSEY 220th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 28, 2022

**Sponsored by:**

**Assemblyman DANIEL R. BENSON**

**District 14 (Mercer and Middlesex)**

**SYNOPSIS**

Requires NJT to pay certain staff and subcontractors one-and-a-half times regular rate for work done during state of emergency.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As introduced.



1 AN ACT concerning compensation for certain work done for the  
2 New Jersey Transit Corporation during a declared state of  
3 emergency and supplementing Title 27 of the Revised Statutes.

4  
5 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*  
6 *of New Jersey:*

7  
8 1. For each hour of time worked during a state of emergency  
9 declared by the Governor, the New Jersey Transit Corporation shall  
10 ensure that each member of the corporation's paratransit staff and  
11 each member of the paratransit staff of a paratransit subcontractor  
12 of the corporation is paid wages at a rate of not less than 150  
13 percent of the employee's or individual's regular hourly wage.

14 For purposes of this section, "paratransit staff" includes, but is  
15 not limited to, drivers, attendants, mechanics, technical support  
16 staff, and any employee covered by a collective bargaining  
17 agreement, who is engaged in the provision of complementary  
18 paratransit service independent of local fixed bus routes under the  
19 provisions of the "Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990" (42  
20 U.S.C. s.12101 et seq.).

21  
22 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

23  
24

25 STATEMENT

26  
27 This bill requires the New Jersey Transit Corporation (NJ  
28 Transit) to ensure that paratransit staff and paratransit staff of  
29 subcontractors are paid "time-and-a-half" for work performed  
30 during a state of emergency declared by the Governor.

ASSEMBLY TRANSPORTATION AND INDEPENDENT  
AUTHORITIES COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO  
**ASSEMBLY, No. 2857**

with committee amendments

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

DATED: JUNE 9, 2022

The Assembly Transportation and Independent Authorities Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Assembly Bill No. 2857.

As amended and reported, this bill requires the New Jersey Transit Corporation (NJ Transit) to ensure that Access Link drivers are paid “time-and-a-half” for operating an Access Link paratransit vehicle during a commercial vehicle travel restriction for inclement weather issued by the Commissioner of Transportation (commissioner). The bill specifies that the enhanced compensation is only available for hours worked during the actual period of the commercial vehicle travel restriction.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS

The committee amendments change when enhanced compensation is required to be paid from work done during a state of emergency declared by the Governor to work done during a commercial vehicle travel restriction issued by the Commissioner of Transportation (commissioner). The amendments also change who is eligible for enhanced compensation to only include Access Link drivers who are actively engaged in operating an Access Link paratransit vehicle. The amendments clarify that enhanced compensation is only available for work performed during the actual period of the commercial vehicle travel restriction.

The amendments also update the title and synopsis of the bill to reflect these changes.

# ASSEMBLY APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

## STATEMENT TO

[First Reprint]

**ASSEMBLY, No. 2857**

# **STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

DATED: DECEMBER 12, 2022

The Assembly Appropriations Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 2857 (1R).

This bill requires the New Jersey Transit Corporation (NJ Transit) to ensure that Access Link drivers are paid “time-and-a-half” for operating an Access Link paratransit vehicle during a commercial vehicle travel restriction for inclement weather issued by the Commissioner of Transportation. The bill specifies that the enhanced compensation is only available for hours worked during the actual period of the commercial vehicle travel restriction.

### FISCAL IMPACT:

The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) concludes that the bill would increase expenditures for the NJ Transit associated with the payment of increased wages to certain employees who operate Access Link Vehicles during certain commercial vehicle travel restrictions.

According to data available through an online employment marketplace, the average hourly wage for an Access Link operator in Newark, New Jersey is roughly \$28 per hour. Based on this amount, the bill would increase NJ Transit’s personnel costs by approximately \$14 per hour for each person who operates an Access Link vehicle during an applicable commercial vehicle travel restriction.

However, the OLS is unable to quantify the annual fiscal impact of the bill because the OLS is unable to predict: (1) the number of hours in which weather-related commercial vehicle travel restrictions will be imposed each year; and (2) the number of Access Link service routes that will be impacted by such restrictions.

# SENATE BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

## STATEMENT TO

[First Reprint]

**ASSEMBLY, No. 2857**

# **STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

DATED: JANUARY 19, 2023

The Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 2857 (1R).

This bill requires the New Jersey Transit Corporation (NJ Transit) to ensure that Access Link drivers are paid “time-and-a-half” for operating an Access Link paratransit vehicle during a commercial vehicle travel restriction for inclement weather issued by the Commissioner of Transportation. The bill specifies that the enhanced compensation is only available for hours worked during the actual period of the commercial vehicle travel restriction.

As reported by the committee, Assembly Bill No. 2857 (1R) is identical to Senate Bill No. 2977, which also was reported by the committee on this date.

### FISCAL IMPACT:

The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) concludes that the bill would increase expenditures for the New Jersey Transit Corporation (NJ Transit) associated with the payment of increased wages to certain employees who operate Access Link vehicles during certain commercial vehicle travel restrictions.

According to data available through an online employment marketplace, the average hourly wage for an Access Link operator in Newark, New Jersey is roughly \$28 per hour. Based on this amount, the bill would increase NJ Transit’s personnel costs by approximately \$14 per hour for each person who operates an Access Link vehicle during an applicable commercial vehicle travel restriction.

However, the OLS is unable to quantify the annual fiscal impact of the bill because the OLS is unable to predict: (1) the number of hours in which weather-related commercial vehicle travel restrictions will be imposed each year; and (2) the number of Access Link service routes that will be impacted by such restrictions.

# LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE

[First Reprint]

## ASSEMBLY, No. 2857

### STATE OF NEW JERSEY 220th LEGISLATURE

DATED: AUGUST 18, 2022

#### SUMMARY

- Synopsis:** Requires NJT to pay certain persons one-and-a-half times regular rate for work during period of commercial vehicle travel restriction issued by DOT.
- Type of Impact:** State expenditure increase.
- Agencies Affected:** New Jersey Transit Corporation.

#### Office of Legislative Services Estimate

<b>Fiscal Impact</b>	<b><u>Annual Impact</u></b>
<b>State Cost Increase</b>	Indeterminate

- The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) concludes that the bill would increase expenditures for the New Jersey Transit Corporation (NJ Transit) associated with the payment of increased wages to certain employees who operate Access Link vehicles during certain commercial vehicle travel restrictions.
- According to data available through an online employment marketplace, the average hourly wage for an Access Link operator in Newark, New Jersey is roughly \$28 per hour. Based on this amount, the bill would increase NJ Transit's personnel costs by approximately \$14 per hour for each person who operates an Access Link vehicle during an applicable commercial vehicle travel restriction.
- However, the OLS is unable to quantify the annual fiscal impact of the bill because the OLS is unable to predict: (1) the number of hours in which weather-related commercial vehicle travel restrictions will be imposed each year; and (2) the number of Access Link service routes that will be impacted by such restrictions.

## **BILL DESCRIPTION**

This bill requires NJ Transit to pay Access Link drivers “time-and-a-half” for operating an Access Link paratransit vehicle during a commercial vehicle travel restriction for inclement weather issued by the Commissioner of Transportation. The bill specifies that the enhanced compensation is only available for hours worked during the actual period of the commercial vehicle travel restriction.

## **FISCAL ANALYSIS**

### ***EXECUTIVE BRANCH***

None received.

### ***OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES***

The OLS concludes that this bill would result in an indeterminate expenditure increase for NJ Transit associated with the payment of increased wages to certain persons who operate Access Link vehicles during certain commercial vehicle travel restrictions.

Under current law, when the Commissioner of Transportation determines that an emergency condition requires the immediate closing of a State highway, the commissioner may close the highway to certain categories of vehicles (e.g., commercial vehicles) without advance notice. In these situations, the commissioner may issue a commercial vehicle travel restriction; however, these restrictions often do not apply to certain categories of commercial vehicles, such as public transportation vehicles. Specifically, the bill provides that when a commercial vehicle travel restriction is issued as a result of inclement weather, and NJ Transit continues to operate Access Link services during such time, then NJ Transit would be required to pay the operators of Access Link vehicles one-and-a-half times their regular hourly wages.

Consequently, the bill is expected to increase the total wages that are paid to certain Access Link operators. According to information available through an online employment marketplace, the average hourly wage for an Access Link operator in Newark, New Jersey was roughly \$28 per hour, as of July 2022. Based on this hourly wage, the bill would increase the personnel costs of Access Link providers by approximately \$14 per hour for each person who operates an Access Link vehicle during an applicable commercial vehicle travel restriction. These increased costs would then be realized by NJ Transit, which contracts with providers for Access Link services.

However, the OLS is unable to quantify the annual fiscal impact of the bill because the OLS is unable to predict: (1) the number of hours in which weather-related commercial vehicle travel restrictions will be imposed each year; and (2) the number of Access Link service routes that will be impacted by such restrictions. Notably, the OLS assumes that the bill would only require NJ Transit to be responsible for increased wages when an applicable commercial vehicle travel restriction directly overlaps with Access Link service routes and hours of operations. For context, Access Link hours of operation generally follow those of NJ Transit’s fixed bus routes. Similarly, Access Link service is only available for pick-up and drop-off locations within a certain radius of NJ Transit’s local fixed bus routes and light rail stations.

*Section: Authorities, Utilities, Transportation and Communications*

*Analyst: Joseph A. Pezzulo  
Senior Research Analyst*

*Approved: Thomas Koenig  
Legislative Budget and Finance Officer*

This legislative fiscal estimate has been produced by the Office of Legislative Services due to the failure of the Executive Branch to respond to our request for a fiscal note.

This fiscal estimate has been prepared pursuant to P.L.1980, c.67 (C.52:13B-6 et seq.).

# SENATE, No. 2977

## STATE OF NEW JERSEY 220th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED AUGUST 8, 2022

**Sponsored by:**

**Senator GORDON M. JOHNSON**

**District 37 (Bergen)**

**Senator LINDA R. GREENSTEIN**

**District 14 (Mercer and Middlesex)**

**Co-Sponsored by:**

**Senators Durr, Gill and Turner**

**SYNOPSIS**

Requires NJT to pay certain persons one-and-a-half times regular rate for work during period of commercial vehicle travel restriction issued by DOT.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As introduced.



**(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 2/2/2023)**

1 AN ACT concerning compensation for certain paratransit workers  
2 during periods of commercial vehicle travel restrictions and  
3 supplementing Title 27 of the Revised Statutes.

4  
5 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*  
6 *of New Jersey:*

7  
8 1. For each hour of time worked during a commercial vehicle  
9 travel restriction for inclement weather issued by the Commissioner  
10 of Transportation, the New Jersey Transit Corporation shall ensure  
11 that eligible personnel are paid wages at a rate of not less than 150  
12 percent of the individual's regular hourly wage. Eligible personnel  
13 shall only receive the enhanced compensation pursuant to this  
14 section for hours worked during the actual period of the commercial  
15 vehicle travel restriction, as determined by the Commissioner of  
16 Transportation.

17 For purposes of this section, "eligible personnel" means an  
18 operator of an Access Link paratransit vehicle who is actively  
19 engaged in operating an Access Link paratransit vehicle.

20  
21 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

22  
23  
24 STATEMENT

25  
26 This bill requires the New Jersey Transit Corporation to ensure  
27 that Access Link drivers are paid "time-and-a-half" for operating an  
28 Access Link paratransit vehicle during a commercial vehicle travel  
29 restriction for inclement weather issued by the Commissioner of  
30 Transportation. The bill specifies that the enhanced compensation  
31 is only available for hours worked during the actual period of the  
32 commercial vehicle travel restriction.

SENATE STATE GOVERNMENT, WAGERING, TOURISM &  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

**SENATE, No. 2977**

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

DATED: NOVEMBER 7, 2022

The Senate State Government, Wagering, Tourism and Historic Preservation Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 2977.

This bill requires the New Jersey Transit Corporation to ensure that Access Link drivers are paid “time-and-a-half” for operating an Access Link paratransit vehicle during a commercial vehicle travel restriction for inclement weather issued by the Commissioner of Transportation. The bill specifies that the enhanced compensation is only available for hours worked during the actual period of the commercial vehicle travel restriction.

# SENATE BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

## STATEMENT TO

### SENATE, No. 2977

# STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JANUARY 19, 2023

The Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 2977.

This bill requires the New Jersey Transit Corporation to ensure that Access Link drivers are paid “time-and-a-half” for operating an Access Link paratransit vehicle during a commercial vehicle travel restriction for inclement weather issued by the Commissioner of Transportation. The bill specifies that the enhanced compensation is only available for hours worked during the actual period of the commercial vehicle travel restriction.

As reported by the committee, Senate Bill No. 2977 is identical to Assembly Bill No. 2857 (1R), which also was reported by the committee on this date.

#### FISCAL IMPACT:

The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) concludes that the bill would increase expenditures for the New Jersey Transit Corporation (NJ Transit) associated with the payment of increased wages to certain employees who operate Access Link vehicles during certain commercial vehicle travel restrictions.

According to data available through an online employment marketplace, the average hourly wage for an Access Link operator in Newark, New Jersey is roughly \$28 per hour. Based on this amount, the bill would increase NJ Transit’s personnel costs by approximately \$14 per hour for each person who operates an Access Link vehicle during an applicable commercial vehicle travel restriction.

However, the OLS is unable to quantify the annual fiscal impact of the bill because the OLS is unable to predict: (1) the number of hours in which weather-related commercial vehicle travel restrictions will be imposed each year; and (2) the number of Access Link service routes that will be impacted by such restrictions.

**LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE**  
**SENATE, No. 2977**  
**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**  
**220th LEGISLATURE**

DATED: JANUARY 3, 2023

**SUMMARY**

**Synopsis:** Requires NJT to pay certain persons one-and-a-half times regular rate for work during period of commercial vehicle travel restriction issued by DOT.

**Type of Impact:** State expenditure increase.

**Agencies Affected:** New Jersey Transit Corporation.

**Office of Legislative Services Estimate**

<b>Fiscal Impact</b>	<b><u>Annual Impact</u></b>
<b>State Cost Increase</b>	Indeterminate

- The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) concludes that the bill would increase expenditures for the New Jersey Transit Corporation (NJ Transit) associated with the payment of increased wages to certain employees who operate Access Link vehicles during certain commercial vehicle travel restrictions.
- According to data available through an online employment marketplace, the average hourly wage for an Access Link operator in Newark, New Jersey is roughly \$28 per hour. Based on this amount, the bill would increase NJ Transit’s personnel costs by approximately \$14 per hour for each person who operates an Access Link vehicle during an applicable commercial vehicle travel restriction.
- However, the OLS is unable to quantify the annual fiscal impact of the bill because the OLS is unable to predict: (1) the number of hours in which weather-related commercial vehicle travel restrictions will be imposed each year; and (2) the number of Access Link service routes that will be impacted by such restrictions.

**BILL DESCRIPTION**

This bill requires NJ Transit to pay Access Link drivers “time-and-a-half” for operating an Access Link paratransit vehicle during a commercial vehicle travel restriction for inclement

weather issued by the Commissioner of Transportation. The bill specifies that the enhanced compensation is only available for hours worked during the actual period of the commercial vehicle travel restriction.

## **FISCAL ANALYSIS**

### ***EXECUTIVE BRANCH***

None received.

### ***OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES***

The OLS concludes that this bill would result in an indeterminate expenditure increase for NJ Transit associated with the payment of increased wages to certain persons who operate Access Link vehicles during certain commercial vehicle travel restrictions.

Under current law, when the Commissioner of Transportation determines that an emergency condition requires the immediate closing of a State highway, the commissioner may close the highway to certain categories of vehicles (e.g., commercial vehicles) without advance notice. In these situations, the commissioner may issue a commercial vehicle travel restriction; however, these restrictions often do not apply to certain categories of commercial vehicles, such as public transportation vehicles. Specifically, the bill provides that when a commercial vehicle travel restriction is issued as a result of inclement weather, and NJ Transit continues to operate Access Link services during such time, NJ Transit would be required to pay the operators of Access Link vehicles one-and-a-half times their regular hourly wages.

Consequently, the bill is expected to increase the total wages that are paid to certain Access Link operators. According to information available through an online employment marketplace, the average hourly wage for an Access Link operator in Newark, New Jersey was roughly \$28 per hour, as of July 2022. Based on this hourly wage, the bill would increase the personnel costs of Access Link providers by approximately \$14 per hour for each person who operates an Access Link vehicle during an applicable commercial vehicle travel restriction. These increased costs would then be realized by NJ Transit, which contracts with providers for Access Link services.

However, the OLS is unable to quantify the annual fiscal impact of the bill because the OLS is unable to predict: (1) the number of hours in which weather-related commercial vehicle travel restrictions will be imposed each year; and (2) the number of Access Link service routes that will be impacted by such restrictions. Notably, the OLS assumes that the bill would only require NJ Transit to be responsible for increased wages when an applicable commercial vehicle travel restriction directly overlaps with Access Link service routes and hours of operations. For context, Access Link hours of operation generally follow those of NJ Transit's fixed bus routes. Similarly, Access Link service is only available for pick-up and drop-off locations within a certain radius of NJ Transit's local fixed bus routes and light rail stations.

*Section: Authorities, Utilities, Transportation and Communications*

*Analyst: Joseph A. Pezzulo  
Senior Research Analyst*

*Approved: Thomas Koenig  
Legislative Budget and Finance Officer*

This legislative fiscal estimate has been produced by the Office of Legislative Services due to the failure of the Executive Branch to respond to our request for a fiscal note.

This fiscal estimate has been prepared pursuant to P.L.1980, c.67 (C.52:13B-6 et seq.).

# Governor Murphy Signs Legislation to Recognize Crucial Importance of Paratransit Workforce

02/23/2023

**TRENTON** – Governor Phil Murphy today signed bill A-2857/S-2977, which requires NJ TRANSIT to pay certain persons one-and-a-half times the regular rate of commercial vehicle travel restriction issued by the Department of Transportation (DOT). The legislation reinforces the Murphy Administration's commitment to providing accessible and efficient transportation for all New Jerseyans.

"When severe storms exacerbate the transportation obstacles that older adults and riders with disabilities already face, it's our paratransit workforce that rise to the time again to deliver critical service," **said Governor Murphy**. "These drivers quite literally put their lives on the line to ensure our most vulnerable residents can get far too long their contributions to our nation-leading transportation system have gone overlooked. This legislation serves as an acknowledgment of their tremendous underscores the importance of safe and equitable transportation for all."

"Access Link provides a vital service to our state's residents with disabilities. Unfortunately, when bad weather hits, drivers are often left out in the cold," **said Senator Johnson**. "Because they are required to finish their routes, even during commercial travel bans, they may have to work hours after their shift is scheduled to end safely. Then workers reliant on public transportation are left with no other option than to stay overnight at the bus depot, since NJ Transit service is suspended. Paratransit workers are entitled to increased compensation when driving in these hazardous conditions."

"Access Link serves New Jersey's seniors and residents with disabilities who have difficulty using public transportation. Paratransit drivers ensure their ride and from important medical appointments, community events, family visits and other errands," **said Assemblyman Dan Benson, Chair of the Assembly's Independent Authorities Committee**. "Even when severe weather limits commercial travel, Access Link drivers must brave the storm to help our most vulnerable. Today we are recognizing the important service these drivers provide and appropriately compensating them."

"When inclement weather requires restricting certain types of travel on State Highways, Access Link continues to operate to ensure the customers who rely on public transportation they need," **said NJDOT Commissioner and NJ TRANSIT Chair Diane Gutierrez-Scaccetti**. "This legislation demonstrates the value and importance of Paratransit drivers."

"We applaud Governor Murphy for signing this important bill into legislation & Senator Johnson and Chairman Benson for introducing this bill," **said Connoir, United Service Workers Political Director and Business Agent**. "Paratransit drivers work hard jobs, they take New Jersey's most vulnerable citizens to life critical appointments and dialysis. These drivers deserve recognition for risking their lives during states of emergency to make sure that our state's disability population is not forgotten. They get where they need to be."

"We are emergency workers, there has never been a doubt about that but I am glad for the state recognizing that fact," **said Shelia Graham, Local 455, United Service Workers Union Shop Steward & paratransit driver**. "My coworkers have driven through snowstorms, have gotten stuck on the side of the road but we continue to get where we need to be in need! Thank you my Governor, the state legislature and United Service Workers Union who have been fighting for this recognition for us!"